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THE NARRAGANSETT PLANTERS

BY

WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER

To Edward A. Burlingame Esqr

with the compliments of

William Davis Miller

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465/57

American Antiquarian Society

THE NARRAGANSETT (R.I.) PLANTERS

BY
WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER

Reprinted from the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society
for April, 1933

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A.
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
1934

The Davis Press
Worcester, Massachusetts

1151658

THE NARRAGANSETT PLANTERS

BY WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER

THE history and the tradition of the "Narragansett Planters," that unusual group of stock and dairy farmers of southern Rhode Island, lie scattered throughout the documents and records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and in the subsequent state and county histories and in family genealogies, the brevity and inadequacy of the first being supplemented by the glowing details of the latter, in which imaginative effort and the exaggerative pride of family, it is to be feared, often guided the hand of the chronicler. Edward Channing may be considered as the only historian to have made a separate study of this community, and it is unfortunate that his monograph, *The Narragansett Planters*,[1] *A Study in Causes*, can be accepted as but an introduction to the subject. It is interesting to note that Channing, believing as had so many others, that the unusual social and economic life of the Planters had been lived more in the minds of their descendants than in reality, intended by his monograph to expose the supposed myth and to demolish the fact that they had "existed in any real sense."[2] Although he came to scoff, he remained to acknowledge their existence, and to concede, albeit with certain reservations, that the "Narragansett Society was unlike that of the rest of New England."

[1]Published as Number Three of the Fourth Series in the *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, Baltimore, 1886.

[2]"Edward Channing—came to me announcing that he intended to demolish the fiction that they existed in any real sense or that the state of society in southern Rhode Island differed much from that in other parts of New England. I told him that as far as I was concerned I had no brief to defend them, and that he could look over our family papers, etc., and draw his own conclusions. This he did, with the result that his paper (somewhat grudgingly in spots) supported the thesis he intended to explode when he began it." From a letter written by Daniel Berkeley Updike, Esq.

He saw clearly, however, that the natural advantages of the Narragansett Country, its soil, its climate, its situation by the sea and the proximity to the port and town of Newport, were the underlying causes of the creation of the wealth of the community, and that this material success was in turn responsible for the social and cultural development it attained.

The ancient boundaries of the Narragansett Country are vague, especially so if it should be intended to include within such bounds all those lands over which the Narragansett Indians ruled, either in their own right, or through the rights of those lesser tribes which were tributary to the Narragansett Sachems.[1] This much esteemed territory was, from 1631 to about 1727, veritably the Tom Tiddlers Ground of the New England Colonies; the Patent of Connecticut dated 1631, the dubious Narragansett Patent, granted to Massachusetts Bay in 1643,[2] and the Patent received by Roger Williams, in the same year, for the "Incorporation of Providence Plantations, in Narragansett Bay, in New England," all gave jurisdiction over the Narragansett Country. It was not until after many years of bitter struggle, of intrusion and of trespass, aggravated by the depredations of exasperated and betrayed Indians, and of intrigue and of the confusing pronouncements of changing Kings' commissioners, that these lands were at last to be irrevocably united to the Colony of Rhode Island. Mention can only be made here of this controversy, but it is hoped that an unbiased account may at some time be prepared, an account uninfluenced by partiality to the several claimants.

In this Narragansett Country, the lands occupied by the Planters lay along the Narragansett Bay and the sea, approximately from the present village of Wickford to, including a portion of, the township of

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[1]Elisha R. Potter, *Early History of Narragansett*, R. I. Hist. Soc. Colls., Vol. III, p. 1.

[2]Col. Thomas Aspinwall declared that this Patent was "always a nullity." Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., 1862–1863, pp. 41–77. Other claims, such as those of the Duke of Hamilton and the Plymouth Colony, only added to the confusion, but were never as important.

Charlestown, and extending inland, to the westward, from eight to ten miles, although the larger estates were situated within a few miles of the salt water. This countryside was, in 1634, described to Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay as "all champain for many miles but very stony and full of Indians,"[1] which is further explained by another statement that the Indians had, for a distance of eight or ten miles from the shore, cleared the lands of wood.[2] Upon these cleared lands the Narragansett Indians planted their corn and other crops, which were to establish their reputation as the foremost agricultural tribe on the Atlantic seaboard.[3]

The climate, despite the somewhat bitter remark of the Reverend Doctor MacSparran that "we are sometimes frying and at other times freezing; and as men often die at their labor in the field by heat, so some in winter are froze to death with the cold,"[4] was considered the best for agriculture in the Northern Colonies, due to the even distribution of rainfall, an essential to good pasture lands, light snows in winter and to the tempering effect of the proximity of the sea. The early State Papers, therefore, contain repeated references to the possibilities and advantages to be derived from its benefits. Governor Bellemont considered the possibility of the culture of grapes and the production of wine[5] and the Government at Whitehall at one time proposed the importation of silkworms and the founding of a silk industry,[6] but these idealistic schemes gave way to the more prosaic, but more lucrative, husbandry of grains and stock.

The soil and the general lay of the land has also been

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[1]John Winthrop, *History of New England*, new ed., 1853, Vol. I, p. 175.

[2]Wilkins Updike, *History of the Narragansett Church*, 1847, p. xii. Unfortunately Updike does not give his authority for this statement, but there is sufficient evidence to confirm the fact that much land was cleared by burning, not only for agriculture but, it is accepted, also to attract game, the green shoots of the second growth being attractive to deer.

[3]Lyman Carrier, *Beginnings ofAgriculture in America*, 1923, p. 188.

[4]*America Dissected*, etc., reprinted as an appendix to the *History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 525.

[5]William B. Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, 1891, Vol. I, p. 398.

[6]*Ibid.*

mentioned as an aid to the agriculture in this countryside, but it may, perhaps, be more truthfully said to have been of greater benefit for the grazing of live stock. The soil in certain portions, as on Boston Neck and Point Judith Neck, may be compared to that of the island of Rhode Island, deservedly held in high esteem throughout the colonies at an early date. Here, and also on the lowlands bordering the salt marshes and adjacent to the tidal rivers and the inland ponds, was excellent pasturage for horses and grazing for cattle. In the upland country, the condition was different, the fields and hillsides being scattered with stones and boulders, evidence of the truth of the description of the lands, as reported to Winthrop. This stony condition, the result of the deposits of the last ice sheet, the terminal morrain of which lay along the southerly portion of the coast,[1] while making agriculture difficult, proved admirably adapted for sheep walks. To these benefits of soil and climate should be added the distinct advantage offered by the close proximity to tide water. With numerous coves suitable for small craft, this shore line was to enhance greatly the value of the Planters' lands by the way of trade. There were several instances where docks were built which permitted the Planter to ship directly from his own lands;[2] and the early establishment of ferries gave easy access to the port of Newport,[3] from whence ships sailed with their cargoes to the other American Colonies, the West Indies and to European ports.[4]

Traders had penetrated the lands of the Narragansetts at an early date, first the Dutch, under the

[1]Ernst Antevs, *Last Ice Recession in New England*, 1922. Containing maps showing locations of terminal morrains.

[2]Mainly upon Boston Neck. Prior to the year 1736 Joseph Mumford had built a pier on Point Judith Neck, probably at Narragansett Pier where the Mumford land was situated. In that year, the pier having been destroyed by storms, Mumford petitioned the Assembly for a grant to enable him to repair it, which was allowed. *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. IV, p. 527.

[3]A. A. & C. V. Chapin, *History of Rhode Island Ferries*, 1925, pp. 217–276. Ferries between Newport and Jamestown and the Narragansett Country were evidently in operation before 1700, possibly by 1675.

[4]From January 1763 to January 1764 from Newport "there were 184 sail of vessels bound on foreign voyages; that is to Europe, Africa and the West Indies; and 352 sail of vessels employed in the coasting trade; that is between Georgia and Newfoundland, inclusive . . .." *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. VI, p. 379.

West India Company, and then the English. Roger Williams and Wilcox had trading posts at, or near, Cocumscussuc, as had also Richard Smith. Who was the first of these three to establish trade with the Indians is, from recent investigations, somewhat doubtful, with the priority in the field seeming to belong to Williams. We have, however, Williams' word that Richard Smith was the first man to build a home in the "English style" in the Narragansett Country, the date of this being obscure, despite the fact that the deposition of Williams, dated 1679, states that about forty-two years previously, Smith "for his conscience sake, (many differences arising) . . . left Taunton and came to the Narragansett Country, where, by God's mercy and the favor of the Narragansett Sachems, he broke the ice . . .."[1] This would place the date of his arrival in Narragansett as about 1637. A further deposition in the same year states that Smith ". . . erected a trading house in the same tract of land where his son Richard Smith inhabits . . .," but in neither deposition is the exact date of his building, either the house in the "English style" or the "trading house,"[2] given, but by inference it has often been considered as at the date of his first coming. However, several evidences would seem to place the erection of this house or houses—for a trading house was, at that time, a different building from a house in the English style—at a considerably later date.[3] John Winthrop, Jr. in his diary in record-

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[1]*Publications of the Narragansett Club*, 1874, Vol. VI, p. 399.

[2]Quoted in John O. Austin, *Geneal. Dictionary of R. I.*, 1887, p. 185.

[3]Charles Wilson Opdyke, *Opdyck Genealogy*, 1889, pp. 73–74. From referenced data in this book it would appear that Richard Smith was on the island of Rhode Island, 1638–1640, a freeman in Taunton in 1642, and in New Amsterdam from 1642 to some time prior to 1656. In 1656 he sold his lands in New Amsterdam, styling himself as of Rhode Island. Furthermore, as Richard Smith's daughter Katharine married Gilbert Updike in New Amsterdam in 1643, it would seem certain that Smith had not settled at Cocumscussuc as early as has been generally supposed, and that the house "in the English style" was not built until after 1651. He, however, was trading there; and there is a record of a case against Wilcox, for trading in violation of a contract, in the New Amsterdam Council Minutes, Court Proceedings, (Dutch MSS., Vol. IV, pp. 227–228), ". . . some time after (the year 1637/8) at Narragansett Mr. Wilcocks and Roger Williams obtained leave of the Indians to set up a trading house . . . and some years afterwards Mr. Richard Smith, Senior, of Portsmouth, removed to this trading house as it is said a partner to Mr. Wilcocks." *Cal. of State Papers*, Col. Amer. & W. I., 1677–1680, p. 393. See also Howard Miller Chapin, *The Trading Post of Roger Williams*, R. I. Soc. of Col. Wars, 1933.

ing his journey from Connecticut, states that he spent the night of Sunday, November 30th, 1645 at the "trading house at Cocumscussuc Mr. Wilkox' house where 2 English . . . John Piggest and John . . . Mr. Williams man." No mention was made of Smith, later to become a close friend and partner of Winthrop in the Atherton Purchase. Also the first deed, known to be extant, by which Smith received land, was from Roger Williams to Richard Smith "of portsmouth on Road Island," and dated 1651, by which Williams deeded to Smith "my trading house at Narragansett together with two Iron Guns or murderers there Lyeing as alsoe my fields & fencing about the side House . . . also the use of the litle Island for goates . . .."[1] This deed may be identified as referring to the land upon which the house known as Smith's now stands. The first recorded deed between Richard Smith, senior, and the Indians was not executed until 1656, and was in the form of a lease, for a period of sixty years; and the bounds recited in this lease clearly show that it did not include the land previously deeded by Williams, although it adjoined it.[2] It may, therefore, he concluded, with a considerable degree of certainty, that Williams was the first landholder in the Narragansett Country, and that the house "in the English style" was built by Smith upon the land that he received from Williams and, therefore, subsequent to the year 1651. The original house was destroyed in King Philip's War and later rebuilt upon the same site. However, despite this recently mooted question as to the date of Richard Smith's actual settlement, he was, nevertheless, the first Englishman to acquire a large estate in the Narragansett Country; and from his subsequent ventures may be considered as the first of those great landholders, the Narragansett Planters. His estate measured, by tradition, nine by three miles,

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[1]James N. Arnold, *The Fones Record*, 1894, pp. 93–94.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 94–95. A further lease from Coginiquand to Smith for lands for one thousand years was executed, June 8, 1659, just prior to the "deeds of gift" to the Atherton Company, pp. 97–98.

and eventually came, by inheritance, to the powerful Updike family, who retained the greater portion of it for many years.

As Richard Smith was the first individual to establish himself firmly in the Narragansett Country, so were the Pettaquamscut Purchasers the first land company to acquire a large tract, measuring approximately twelve miles square, and which was eventually to contain many of the largest and most fertile farms of the Planters. The first deed of this purchase was made on January 20, 1657,[1] between the Indian Sachems Qussaquanch, Kachanaquant and Quequaquenuet and John Hull, mint master and merchant of Boston, John Porter, Samuel Wilbor, Samuel Willson and Thomas Mumford, all of the island of Rhode Island. This tract included practically the whole of the present township of South Kingstown and portions of the townships of North Kingstown, Exeter and Narragansett. At a later date two other members were admitted with equal shares, William Brenton and Benedict Arnold,[2] both residents of the island of Rhode Island and both of whom held the office of Governor of the Colony. About twenty years later, Jireth Bull sought partnership, but there is no evidence that he was admitted.[3] It is to be noted that all the Purchasers, save John Hull, were men of the Colony of Rhode Island, and in several instances men of substantial influence and importance, a fact that was later to have considerable significance during the years of bitter struggle for the possession of the Narragansett Country. How John Hull happened to be admitted as a partner is a problem; he never settled on his lands in the Purchase and rarely visited them and from his letters and his diary it

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[1]Rhode Island Land Evidence, Vol. II, p. 147. This was the first deed. Subsequent deeds were executed at later dates, eventually bringing the total amount of land included in the purchase to the maximum mentioned. These deeds are recorded in the same book of Land Evidence, pp. 149, 151–155. (Also see *Early History of Narragansett*, pp. 275–277.)

[2]Arnold was admitted, June 4, 1668. Rhode Island Land Evidence, Vol. II, p. 316. The record of the date of William Brenton's admittance does not appear to have survived, but was prior to that of Arnold's.

[3]John Hull's Letter Book. Original manuscript preserved by the American Antiquarian Society, but unfortunately as yet unpublished. (See letter dated April 16, 1677.)

may be discerned that he was more in touch with the members of the Atherton Company and often regarded the transactions of his associates at Pettaquamscut with misgiving and impatience.[1] His diary[2] shows that he was frankly bored by two of the Purchasers, probably because of their liberality and tolerance in religious matters. It is possible that his wealth and his acknowledged influence in the Bay Colony may have at the time been considered advantageous by the other Purchasers.

The Pettaquamscut Purchasers assigned to themselves large tracts in several different parts of the purchase, thereby assuring a more equal distribution with reference to soil, woodland and accessibility; the tracts so allotted totaling about seven thousand acres to each Purchaser. The remainder of the lands were offered for sale, and several of the tracts so purchased were to form the first holdings of the families of the Planters. The Purchasers also laid out a settlement on the west bank of the Pettaquamscut or Narrow River, at the foot of the present Tower Hill[3], later to extend up the hillside to the crest and to become the village of Tower Hill, the first county seat in the Narragansett Country. This settlement, the first in the Narragansett Country, was called Pettaquamscut and here, between the years 1658 and 1669 it is known that Willson and Porter[4] had built houses as had Jireth Bull, William Haviland, William Bundy, Rowse Helme[5] and also George

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[1]John Hull's Letter Book. Letters dated December 2, 1674; July 7, 1679 and August 21, 1679.

[2]*Amer. Antiq. Soc. Trans.*, 1857, Vol. III, pp. 150–151. Reference to a visit to Pettaquamscut.

[3]Enacted, 1729/30. Court House completed 1732. Tower Hill retained this preeminence until 1752, when the village of Little Rest, two miles to the westward on the hill of the same name (now Kingston), wrested the honor from her older neighbor. The origin of the name of these villages is wrapped in obscurity. That of Tower Hill is probably derived from the erection of a watch tower on the hill during the Spanish War in 1739, as prior to that the hill was designated by reference to nearby landholders, i.e., "near Robert Cases dwelling house." After 1740 the name it bears to this day came into general usage. As to the origin of the name Little Rest, there is nothing but imaginative supposition.

[4]Old Colony Record Book (preserved in the State House, Providence, transcript in the R. I. Hist. Soc.) Vol. 2, p. 262. Samuel Willson calls himself "of pettacomscutt in Narragansett" on May 16, 1664; and (*Idem*, p. 578.) in 1669, John Porter describes himself as "now dwelling" there.

[5]South Kingstown Land Evidence, Vol. III, p. 724. These men built before 1663.

Gardiner to whom the Purchasers had sold lots of about twenty acres each.

Thomas Mumford built his house near the present village of Narragansett[1] and John Hull's *Diary* and his *Letter Book* also show that he had a house in the neighborhood in 1664,[2] occupied by a tenant farmer, with whom Hull was apparently ever at odds, and whom he seldom visited. To the west of Pettaquamscut, on and about Little Rest Hill, there were soon laid out farms of about five hundred acres. William Knowles was living on one in 1671,[3] Jireth Bull purchased his farm in 1668[4] and is believed to have built upon it a stone house[5] just south of the present village of Kingston; and Robert Hazard having purchased five hundred acres to the northeast of this village in 1668, was living on his land some years later.[6] These transactions between the Purchasers and Knowles, Bull and Hazard, as also in several other instances, are not always clear, for it would appear that frequently the purchaser had entered upon the land, and had often built upon it, prior to the execution of the deed. It is certain, however, that by a decade before 1700, there were a considerable number of large farms in this vicinity.

The other great purchase, a word employed for want of a more accurately descriptive term, in that portion of the Narragansett Country identified with the Planters, was made in the year 1659 by a group of men later to be known as the Atherton Company. The first portion, known as the Northern or Quidnesset Purchase, comprised the lands lying along Narragansett Bay from East Greenwich to Wickford, excluding,

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[1]Probably near the Cove at the southern end of the Pettaquamscut River and not far distant from the Crying Bog.

[2]Probably on Point Judith Neck. The tenant farmer's name was William Heffernan. Hull's Diary (See note 24), p. 154, and Hull's Letter Book, letters dated September 10, 1674; October 9, 1674 and April 16, 1677.

[3]South Kingstown Land Evidence, Vol. II, p. 1. *Early History of Narragansett*, pp. 292 and 391.

[4]South Kingstown Land Evidence, Vol. II, p. 320.

[5]Note by Judge Elisha Potter. "An old stone house or fort used to stand near this burying ground and the old well." This refers to the Case burying ground on Little Rest Hill.

[6]South Kingstown Land Evidence, Vol. I, p. 9.

however, those lands which Richard Smith had received from Williams and from the Sachems. This deed was dated June 11, 1659. The Southern or Boston Neck Purchase, deeded on July 4th of the same year, extended from Wickford to the mouth of the Pettaquamscut River, which river was the boundary between the Atherton and Pettaquamscut Purchasers.[1] This portion embraced that fertile neck of land, called by the Indians Namcook and now, Boston Neck, upon which the richest familes of the Planters had their homes.[2] The preamble of the "deed of gift," so-called, although it appeared later that three hundred fathoms of peag was actually paid,[3] may well be quoted, partly because of the unusual consideration mentioned, and partly for the reason of the description of the members of the Atherton Company which it contains: "Knowe all men by these presents, that I, Coginaquand, chiefe Sachem of Naraganset, In Consideration of the greate love and Eaffection, I doe beare unto Englishmen, Especially mr. John Winthropp, Governor of Conecticott, Majr Humphrey Atherton of Massachusets, Richard Smith, Senior, and Richard Smith, Junior, of Cocumscosuck, Traders, Leut. William Hudson of Boston, and Amos Richeson of Boston, aforesaid, and John Tucker of Nashuway, Trader, have given and granted . . ..[4]

It is to be noted that this deed to the Southern portion, as well as that to the Northern, is drawn in the form of a deed of gift. There was an important reason why this pretext was employed. In the year 1658 the Colony of Rhode Island, claiming jurisdiction over the

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[1] *The Fones Record*, pp. 1–4.

[2] The Robinsons and Gardiners; and also at a later date the Hazards.

[3] *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. II, p. 60, "which is ye only summ acknowledged to be received by ye said Cathaquant."

[4] Among others connected with the Atherton Company but whose names do not appear in the deed, were Thomas Chaffinch, Jonathan Scott, Daniel Denison, Jonathan Alcock, Lyman Bradstreet and Thomas Willet. These names are included in a letter from Charles II to the Colonies dated 21 June, 1662, which recommends these "Proprietors to your neighborly kindness and protection." The Atherton Company maintained an agent in London, one John Scott, who would seem to have been "worthy of his hire." This letter is included in the *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol I, p. 466.

Narragansett Country and fearful of unfair purchases from the Indians of their lands by those other claimants or their agents, enacted a law that no land should be purchased from the Indians without the express consent of a "Court of Commissioners," under penalty of forfeiture and fine.[1] Of this law Major Atherton was cognizant, and his knowledge of it is emphasized in a letter written, in 1670, by Roger Williams to Major John Mason of Connecticut, wherein, after calling the purchases "an unneighborly and unchristian intrusion upon us as being the weaker, contrary to your laws as well as ours," Williams states that "this I told Major Atherton at his first going up to the Nahiggonsik about this business. I refused all their proffers of land and refused to interpret for them to the Indians."[2] As a matter of fact, the Atherton Company had thereby attempted to ensure their possession, for if, as they claimed and continued to claim for many years thereafter, the Narragansett Country was not under the jurisdiction of Rhode Island, the prohibitive act of 1658 was inoperative; but, if the lands were under Rhode Island, then they hoped that the apparent form of the instrument, masquerading as a deed of gift, would circumvent the law. It is also significant that this "unchristian intrusion" was not made until after the death of Oliver Cromwell, a man held in certain awe by the Colonies, and a man who had been a close friend of Roger Williams in his early years in the Barrington household in England, a friendship that had continued as was evidenced by Cromwell's willing endorsement of the patent received by Roger Williams under the seal of Charles I.[3] The whole purchase was, as a matter of fact, an intrusion, and was purposely made to strengthen, by possession, the claim of Connecticut for the Narragansett Country; a possession greatly enlarged by the hardly creditable mortgage transaction, under the provisions of which claim

[1] *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. I, pp. 403–404.

[2] *Publications of the Narragansett Club*, 1874, Vol. VI, pp. 342–343. Also William Davis Miller, *Withington's Plat of Boston Neck*, 1924, pp. 23–24.

[3] *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. I, p. 290. Addressed to Massachusetts Bay.

was laid to all the remaining Narragansett lands.[1] The Atherton Company's headquarters at Smith's, at Cocumscussuc, were long to be the field base of operations in the attempted acquisition of the Narragansett Country. As a result of the possibility of clouded titles, the lands were not at once settled. Rhode Island in 1672[2] with the expressed, but unrealized, hope that "the removing of such a danger and doubt of forfeiture of their lands to the Colony may take off their bias to another" (Connecticut), granted clear title to the lands. It has, therefore, been truly said that only men of comparatively large means, and of considerable political power, could have maintained themselves with any degree of success during these turbulent years, facing the loss of their lands by the doubtful validity of their titles, and of their goods by the acts of Indians, incited to hostility through the carefully engendered plans of the United Colonies. This perhaps is more applicable to the landholders on Boston Neck[3] than to those at Pettaquamscut, although the latter, because of their earlier settlement and development, suffered more from the depredations committed during King Philip's War, the destruction of Jireth Bull's house[4] at Pettaquamscut and of George Palmer's mill[5] at the head of the Pettaquamscut River being examples.

It is therefore interesting to consider the fact that of those seventeenth century settlers whose names and fortunes contributed to the subsequent fame of the Planters of Narragansett, the majority had first taken up land within the Pettaquamscut Purchase. The one notable exception in the Atherton Purchases was that of the Updike family, who inherited the broad

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[1] *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. I, p. 465, 1661. Also see S. G. Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island*, 1859, Vol. I, pp. 275, and also *Early History of Narragansett*, p. 61.

[2] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 478.

[3] In evidence of this, Rowland Robinson who purchased land from Andrew Willet on Boston Neck in 1700, a few years later saw fit to take a deed from the Sachem Ninigret, confirming his title.

[4] South Kingstown Land Evidence, December, 1675. Vol. I, p. 106.

[5] A deposition of Samuel Teft, dated March 17, 1721/2, states that "George Pamer built a mill . . . which mill was Burnt Down in ye Indian warr . . .".

acres of Richard Smith, an exception which is explained by the fact that although Smith was an important member in the Atherton Company, he had acquired his lands prior to the Act of 1658. He was, therefore, securely established with no cloud upon his title, and so continued, despite his activities in the furtherance of the claims of Connecticut, for jurisdiction over the Narragansett Country.[1]

As all the Purchasers of Pettaquamscut, save Hull, were Rhode Island men, so were the great majority of those who bought from them. Such was the case of Robert Hazard, previously mentioned, who had built and was living on his lands near Little Rest before 1687. Hazard came from Portsmouth where he was admitted a freeman in 1655, and he had served the little colony, once as a Commissioner, and for five years, as a Deputy.[2] The exact date of his final removal from Portsmouth is uncertain, but in 1687 he was paying his tax in Kings Town, where he died, about 1718, leaving an estate of £748:9:8.[3] Before his death he had increased his land holdings, by numerous purchases, including land on Point Judith Neck, which he deeded to his son Stephen.[4] Robert Hazard was the progenitor of the largest and most powerful family of the Narragansett Planters, a family which, unlike so many of the others, has retained its position and many of its lands to this day.

Robert's eldest son, Thomas, greatly increased the land holdings of the family by the purchase, in 1698[5], from Samuel Sewal, son-in-law and heir of John Hull, of over nine hundred acres, lying in the Pettaquamscut Purchase, of which three hundred acres lay on the

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[1]Which was carried on by his son Richard Smith, Jr., as may be seen from his letters to John Winthrop, of Connecticut, preserved by the Mass. Hist. Soc., in which, while professing his allegiance to Connecticut, he states that, for business reasons, he has thought it advisable to take office under the Rhode Island Government.

[2]*Geneal. Dictionary of R. I.*, 1887, p. 320. Robert Hazard was a surveyor, and in this capacity served the Purchasers at Pettaquamscut. Unfortunately his survey of the central portion of the Purchase is lost.

[3]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. I, p. 116.

[4]*Geneal. Dictionary of R. I.*, p. 320.

[5]Caroline Hazard, *College Tom*, 1893. Copy of the Sewal deed is given, pp. 216–220.

west side of the Saugatucket River near the present village of Peace Dale and six hundred acres "on the Back Side of the Ponds," being west of Matunuck. At a later date he further acquired the southern end of Boston Neck, a tract of about fifteen hundred acres,[1] also lands on Point Judith Neck and in other portions of the country-side. Much of this land he divided, prior to his death, among his sons,[2] one of whom, Robert, was later reputed to have held "great cattle ranges" to the westward, by Worden's Pond. Thomas Hazard died in 1746 with an estate valued at £3,745.[3] Space does not permit a detailed description of the land holdings of this large and prosperous family, it being sufficient to say that its members owned large estates of upland and meadow and marsh, situated in the most advantageous and fertile sections[4] of the Narragansett Country, and that from their inventories, it is apparent that they died possessed of substantial estates.[5]

The Robinsons were another family to achieve wealth and prominence, not only among the Narragansett Planters, but also in the Colony. On September 6, 1700, Rowland Robinson, who had emigrated from England twenty-five years before and who appears to have first settled near Newport, purchased three hundred acres of land from Andrew Willett, "east by the salt water, west by petticomcott pond."[6] This land was situated on Boston Neck, near the

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[1]South Kingstown Land Evidence, Vols. III & IV. The lands were bought from Samuel Viall in 1727, 660 acres; and from Francis Brinley, in 1738, 800 acres.

[2]South Kingstown Land Evidence, Vol. IV. In 1738 he divided 1478 acres on Boston Neck between four sons.

[3]The amount of an inventory is often misleading as an estimate of the wealth of the owner of the estate, due to divisions of goods made prior to death.

[4]Such as Boston Neck, the Saugatucket valley between Tower and Little Rest Hills, The Foddering Place and Ram Island, fertile grazing lands on the Salt Ponds, on the westerly side of Point Judith Neck and, as has been noted, lands on the "Back Side" and by Worden's Pond.

[5]Between the years 1736 and 1759 are recorded Hazard estates ranging in value from over £6,000 to over £57,000. The task of reconciling these figures to the present day values presents difficulties, especially in view of the fluctuating values of colonial currency and bills of credit.

[6]R. I. Land Evidence, Vol. II, p. 122. These land evidences are preserved at the State House in Providence. Mss. copies are also available at the R. I. Hist. Soc.

present Saunderstown, and was the southern half of the share originally assigned by the Atherton Company to "John Tinker of Nashuway, Trader." It was transferred by order of a meeting of the Company on March 21, 1660/1 to Thomas Willett,[1] the first English Mayor of New York, of whom Andrew was the youngest son. Robinson probably built up in this land where the great house of his grandson of the same name now stands. Shortly after this purchase he increased his land holdings by the purchase of other tracts, including three thousand acres of the so-called "vacant lands" ordered sold by the Colonial Assembly.[2] Rowland Robinson died in 1716, leaving the considerable estate of £2,166.[3] His son, William Robinson, at one time Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony, increased the family fortune to a great extent and added materially to their land holdings by the purchase of tracts from the heirs of William Brenton, situated adjacent to Silver Lake and Sugar Loaf Hill, and on Point Judith Neck from the heirs of Thomas Mumford.[4] He maintained a large farm and was interested in the betterment of the breed of Narragansett Pacers. He died in 1751 and his inventory shows a total of £21,573/5/5.[5] His son Rowland, although he lived to see the decline of the Planters' fortunes, nevertheless was able to maintain successfully the wealth and the power that his father had enjoyed in the community.

There was one very large family which had ante-

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[1] *The Fones Record*, pp. 5–6, ". . . that major Winslow & Capt Willit . . . shal have mr. Tinkers shaire betwixt them in the Southerne tracte . . .".

[2] *Early History of Narragansett*, p. 217. This land was deeded to Robinson on September 28, 1709. For the records of the sale of these vacant lands in the Narragansett Country by the Colony, see *Idem.*, pp. 110–112 and 213–219. The bounds of this tract place it adjacent to the Connecticut line and to what Robinson termed "my Wood River Farm." It has been claimed that Robinson also purchased five thousand acres from the Sachems, but in absence of the deed, it may be considered as being a statement made in error, and probably a mistaken reference to the purchase of the vacant lands. His will, however, shows him possessed of but 680 acres: 300 on Boston Neck, 300 in the township of Westerly, the Wood River Farm; and 80 with a grist mill, "Ye Mill Farm."

[3] South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. I, p. 86.

[4] These deeds, of various dates, are to be found in Vol. IV of the South Kingstown Land Evidence, which shows the purchase of large tracts of land.

[5] South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. IV, p. 335. His will disposes of over thirteen hundred acres.

dated that of the Robinsons and Hazards in the Narragansett Country and which by intermarriage and by individual effort was to attain an important position in the countryside, the Gardiners. On May 26, 1663 the Pettaquamscut Purchasers deeded to George Gardiner, calling himself of Narragansett, one thousand acres of land "whereof wee have layed out a house lott of Thirtye Road wid and Eight score Road long . . . and he hath built upon it."[1] George Gardiner had fourteen children, many of whom prospered in the Narragansett Country.[2] His grandson William was, however, the first to become prominent as one of the great landed proprietors of the Narragansett Country. For some inscrutable reason he was known as "Wicked Will," probably because of his religious, rather than moral defects. Upon his death in 1732, his will shows that he was possessed of over sixteen hundred acres and his inventory shows an estate valued at £5,000.[3] William Gardiner's daughter Hannah married the Reverend Doctor MacSparran[4] and his son, Sylvester, doctor of medicine, was later to achieve a position of influence in Maine.[5] This family was meticulous in spelling their name with an "i" and is reported to have looked with scorn upon those who did not, referring to these unfortunates as "the blind Gardners."

Of other families in the heart of the Planters' Country, mention should be made of the Coles, Babcocks, Potters, Reynolds, Helmes, Willets, Carpenters, Congdons and Watsons, all of whom shared in the general prosperity to a greater or lesser degree. To the north lay the great lands of the Updikes,[6] originally belonging to Richard Smith. Unfortunately, through

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[1]Old Colony Record Book, p. 269. Gardiner married Herodias (Long) Hicks, whose previous, and subsequent, matrimonial, adventures were the scandalous delight of contemporary old wives. Caroline E. Robinson, *The Gardiners of Narragansett*, 1919.

[2]*Geneal. Dictionary of R. I.*, pp. 81–82.

[3]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. II, p. 226.

[4]*History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 126.

[5]*Ibid.*, pp. 126–128.

[6]Wilkins Updike states that his ancestor Daniel Updike owned 3,000 acres.

neglect, the records of North Kingstown[1] are in an imperfect state of preservation, and much regarding the Updike estate is missing and, as the inventory of Gilbert Updike, being in such fragmentary condition, or having been destroyed, give little or no assistance to research. The inventory of his grandson, Daniel,[2] who achieved deserved prominence in the colony by his outstanding ability and culture, is, however, preserved in part.

Nor should the families of the Champlins and the Stantons be omitted, with their large estates situated in what is now the township of Charlestown. Jeffery Champlin was one of the original settlers of the Misquamakuck, or Westerly, Purchase in 1660/1, and his name appears in the "articles of agreement" dated March twenty-second of that year.[3] His son Jeffery purchased a tract of land in the present township of South Kingstown in 1685 and also another smaller tract north of the village of Kingston, "on border of Great Plain." The will of his son Jeffery shows that he died possessed of lands on Point Judith Neck, also to the westward of the Point Judith Ponds, and also his father's lands by the Great Plain. He died in 1717, his inventory totaling over £1,500.[4] It was, however, for his uncle and cousin, both bearing the name of Christopher, to lead the family in wealth and to be numbered among the leading Narragansett Planters. The lands of the Christopher Champlins lay in the township of Charlestown, created by the division of the old township of Westerly in 1738. The Champlin estate comprised two thousand acres and the inventory of the Christopher Champlin who died in 1734, the

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[1]These records suffered from fire and neglect. They are now, in this mutilated condition, carefully preserved.

[2]Wilkins Updike, *Memoirs of the Rhode Island Bar*, 1842, pp. 34–64. This book also contains excellent biographical sketches of Matthew Robinson, Henry Marchant, John Cole and Rouse J. Helme, all connected with the Narragansett Country.

[3]*Early History of Narragansett*, pp. 241–269. Judge Potter copied this data from a contemporary copy of the Record book of the Purchase, now in my possession. On September 15, 1661 house lots were "drawn and cast" and Champlin received lot number forty-eight. The lots measured twelve by eighty rods.

[4]*Geneal. Dictionary of R. I.*, pp. 274–277. The "Great Plain" extends from the western foot of Little Rest Hill to the Usquapaug River.

grandson of the first settler Jeffery, showed that he was a man of considerable wealth.[1] The members of the Stanton family were later arrivals in the Narragansett Country, but at one period were reputed to own a tract of land four and a half miles long and two miles wide, situated also in Charlestown.[2]

The Potter family was long resident in the Narragansett Country and held large estates in the eighteenth century, Thomas Potter, who died in 1728, leaving an estate valued at over four thousand pounds.[3] His brother Robert also held large tracts of land; and, at a later date, Col. Thomas Potter owned seven farms. His son, Elisha Reynolds Potter,[4] received by inheritance from his grandfather, Elisha Reynolds, large tracts, which he had purchased from the Knowles family and others, so that by 1800 his holdings amounted to above three thousand acres; a considerable portion of these lands, near and in Kingston village, remaining in the family to this day.

The Narragansett Planters, planters in the correct contemporary meaning of the word,[5] are not to be confused with the planters of the Southern Colonies. As has been stated previously, by the nature of the soil and of the climate, the Narragansett Planters were rather stock and dairy farmers than agriculturists. The fact that this fertility of the soil and this beneficial climate were in the main responsible for the success of their ventures, is essentially correct, but there must needs be added that the employment of a large number of negro slaves greatly augmented the possible economic returns from their land. Rhode Island held more slaves than any of the other colonies in the North, and at one period, during the first half of the eighteenth

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[1] *Geneal. Dictionary of R. I.*, pp. 274–277. His son, Christopher, became a man of prominence in Newport.

[2] *History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 179.

[3] It must be realized that the inventories did not include lands and buildings, so that where a man was possessed of large land holdings, his estate would be worth a considerable amount above the inventory total.

[4] Elisha Reynolds Potter was admitted to membership in the American Antiquarian Society in 1815.

[5] Governor Peleg Sanford in 1680 reported to the Board of Trade that "for planters wee conceave there are about five hundred." This letter is printed in full in S. G. Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island*, Vol. I, p. 488–491.

century, the township of South Kingstown exceeded, with the exception of Newport, the remainder of the colony in the number of enslaved negroes.[1] Indians, even in the seventeenth century, were seldom held in bondage by the Colony of Rhode Island, probably because of the friendship that existed with the Narragansett Tribe and because of the influence of Roger Williams.[2] In 1675 the Assembly enacted that "noe Indian in this Collony be a slave, but only to pay their debts or for their bringing up, or custody they have received, or to performe covenant as if they had their countrymen not in warr."[3] This sentiment against enslaved Indians is further evidenced by the enactment of a law in 1715, prohibiting their importation.[4] It is significant that in the South Kingstown inventories, in the rare occasions that Indians are mentioned, a distinction is usually made by listing them as "servants" or "indented servants."

The general importation of negro slaves, however, did not commence until a later date. Governor Sanford, in his report to the Board of Trade, mentioned that by 1680 "onely a few blakes imported,"[5] and Governor Samuel Cranston stated[6] that between 1698 and the

[1]Elisha R. Potter, Jr., Address before the R. I. Hist. Soc., 1851, p. 13. At one period, about 1748, South Kingstown even exceeded Newport. *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. V, p. 270.

[2]This, however, was not the case in Massachusetts where Indians were enslaved and many exported. In 1645 Emanuel Downing, writing to John Winthrop, requests that ". . . If upon a Just warre (with the Narragansetts) the Lord should deliver them into our hands, wee might easily have men woemen and children enough to exchange for Moores, which wil be more gaynefull pilladge for us than wee conceive . . .". *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, Fourth Series, Vol. VI, pp. 64–65.

[3]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. II, p. 535. This prohibition was obviously open to evasion, but it would appear that advantage was rarely taken of its provisions. A few were, however, sold by the Colony, captives of the War of 1675–6, "not for life, however, but for a term of years, according to their circumstances, and for their protection." It is interesting to note that an earlier act of 1652, prohibiting the holding of negroes or Indians as slaves for longer than ten years, would seem to have become a dead letter.

[4]*Idem*, Vol. IV, p. 193. This did not, evidently, apply to Spanish Indians (from the West Indies), as James Congdon bequeathed six by his will in 1756. *Geneal. Dictionary of R. I.*, p. 53.

[5]See note 5, page 66.

[6]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. IV, pp. 54–55. Reply to a Circular Letter from the Board of Trade, . . . relative to Negro Slaves, dated December 5, 1708. In this reply Cranston notes that three ships sailed from Newport in 1700 to Africa to transport slaves to the Barbadoes possibly the beginning of that "Triangular Trade" of "rum, negroes and molasses" that so enriched the Colony. The captains of these ships were Nicholas Hillgrove, Jacob Bill and Edwin Carter, and they were accompanied by Thomas Bruster and John Bates, merchants of Barbadoes.

end of 1707 "we have not had any negroes imported into this colony from the coast of Africa" and that, with one exception,[1] "the whole and only supply of negroes to this colony, is from the island of Barbadoes; from whence is imported one year with another, betwixt twenty and thirty; . . . the general price is from £30 to £40 per head."[2] In another letter of the same date and with reference to the Colonial militia, Cranston includes a table showing the number of "black servants" in each township in the Colony.[3] The total in the colony was at that date 426, of which over half (220) were in Newport. Kingstown[4] was next with 85. It is interesting to note how the increase in the negro population[5] of the Colony rose and fell, in ratio to its prosperity and the prosperity of the Narragansett Planters, who formed a very important part in its economic structure. From the 426 "black servants" in 1708, as noted above, the number had increased, by the census of 1748/9 during the years of increasing prosperity in the Narragansett Country, to 3077, of which 380 negroes were in South Kingstown, 184 in North Kingstown and 58 in Charlestown, the three principal Planter townships.[6] With the restrictions placed upon trade and its resultant decline, and with the unsettled conditions preceding the Revolu-

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[1]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. IV, pp. 54–55. On May 20, 1696, the brigantine *Seaflower*, Thomas Winsor, master, arrived in Newport with forty-seven negroes from Africa. He sold fourteen in Rhode Island and transported the rest to Boston "where the owners lived."

[2]*Ibid.* Cranston further states that there is "but small encouragement for that trade to this colony; because of the general dislike our planters have for them, by reason of their turbulent and unruly tempers. And that "most of our planters that are able and willing to purchase any of them, are supplied by the offspring of those they have already, which increase daily . . .." With reference to their "turbulent and unruly tempers," the Town of South Kingstown saw fit in 1724 and in 1726 to pass laws limiting their privileges especially to hold their Fair on the "third week in June" each year. South Kingstown Council Records, Vol. I, Dec. 12, 1724 and June 7, 1726.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 59.

[4]The old township which was divided in 1722 into North and South Kingstown.

[5]Which may be considered almost synonymous, especially in the earlier periods, with slaves; as the proportion of those freed, at this time, was comparatively small.

[6]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. V, p. 270. South Kingstown shows the greatest number, Providence second with 125, and Newport third with only 110. In the year 1758 the number of negroes in the Colony was 4697 but the population by townships is not given.

tion, the resources of the Planters dwindled and by the census of 1774, the number was reduced to 3668, over 1000 less than were recorded in 1758. According to Judge Potter, as early as 1730 there were 1000 slaves in South Kingstown, possibly an overstatement in view of the total number of negroes at that time, and he further states that families in the Narragansett Country would hold, on an average, from five to forty slaves each.[1]

Although Newport was the great slave mart of New England, and although the principal importers[2] were in that town, and at a later date, Providence, both the home ports of the "triangular trade," there were several instances of the Narragansett Planters importing their own slaves directly to the landings on Boston Neck, as did Rowland Robinson, the younger, and Col. Thomas Hazard.[3] It may be recorded that there is every evidence that the slaves in Narragansett were

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[1]A much larger proportion of freed negroes would be included in this number than in the count of the previous census, as sentiment against slavery was rapidly mounting. Johnson, *Slavery in Rhode Island*, R. I. Hist. Soc. Quarterly, Vol. II, states that the "history of slavery in Rhode Island from 1755 to 1776, is the history of the decay of that institution in that Colony." From 1749 to 1756 it is interesting to note that the negro population of the Colony increased at a greater ratio than the white; whites (1749), 32,775, negroes, 3077; (1756), whites, 35,939, negroes, 4697. Further references to slavery in the Colony may be found in Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade in America*, Carnegie Inst. of Washington, 1923, Vol. III, pp. 108–404. *Early History of Narragansett*, p. 114, shows that in 1730 there were 649 negroes in Newport, 333 in South Kingstown and 165 in North Kingstown. How Judge Potter could reconcile his statement with these figures can not be understood unless there was truth in the statement that the true number of slaves held was often concealed. Slavery in Rhode Island was never actually abolished, but by an act passed in 1784 all children born after the date of the passage of this act were declared free. An estimate made four years prior to this act showed 156 slaves in South Kingstown and 78 in North Kingstown. As late as 1830 there were still 17 slaves in the State. *History of the Narragansett Church*, pp. 170, 174.

[2]After 1800 Rhode Island was still an important figure in the slave trade to the Southern States. From 1804 to 1808, of the 38,775 slaves imported into Charlestown, S. C., 7,238 were brought in vessels hailing from Rhode Island ports. *History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 168.

[3]Elisha R. Potter, Jr., *Report before the House of Representatives of the Rhode Island Legislature*, January, 1840, reprinted in part in the *History of the Narragansett Church*, pp. 168–174. The landings would be the old South Ferry and Watson's. On one occasion Rowland Robinson, upon the arrival of a shipment, noting the distressing condition of the slaves, refused to sell his share but retained them himself to the number of twenty-eight. *Idem*, p. 174. Thomas Hazard (College Tom) was one of the first of the Planters to strive for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. Hazard was a Quaker and as early as 1757 the South Kingstown Monthly Meeting had put itself on record against slavery. Caroline Hazard, *College Tom*, Boston, 1893, p. 169.

well treated by their masters,[1] cared for, not only by them, but by the churches, who baptized them and admitted them to communion and, in general, maintained an oversight as to their well being.[2] Many were given their freedom, although possibly often because of old age; a rather brutal device to obviate the expense of maintenance of an old and useless slave,[3] but this was speedily curbed by law.

With regard to the number of slaves held by the Narragansett Planters, accounts differ when reported by tradition or when recorded by inventory, the latter, as has been noted, being at times not conclusive evidence of the maximum size of the estate. But neither record nor tradition can be reconciled with the picturesque fiction that the Planters were masters of hordes of slaves, an error accepted even by the critical Channing in his monograph.[4] The greatest number reported by tradition is forty, reputed to be held by the Stanton family,[5] which might possibly approach a horde, if that comprehensive word can be defined in actual numbers. Rowland Robinson, the younger, is stated to have held at least twenty-eight at one time and probably more; while the inventory of his father, the Deputy Governor, reveals but nineteen, the greatest number listed in the South Kingstown Records.[6] Again in the case of Robert Hazard of Boston Neck, there is

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[1]Judge Potter states, (see note 3, p. 23) "slaves were never subjected here to severer punishments than whites for the same offenses, as has been the case in some States; and they enjoyed the protection of the laws for offenses against their persons equally with the whites . . . no law was ever passed to restrain the manumission of slaves, except just so far as was necessary to prevent their becoming chargeable to the towns where they lived . . . It is believed that while slavery existed in Rhode Island, the slaves were treated with humanity, and that they were generally rather a burden than a source of profit to their owners." This last statement is exaggerated, as they were a profit but also a burden, especially regarding their health, often impaired by the cold climate.

[2]*History of the Narragansett Church*, pp. 175–178. The Congregationalists also admitted negroes to communion and cared for them.

[3]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. IV, pp. 415–416, (1728/9). Aged and helpless slaves when manumitted, a deposit of £100 was required to be made to the Town Treasurer for security.

[4]And repeated by James Truslow Adams in his *Provincial Society*, 1927, p. 227, substituting "troops" for "hordes," both being equally inapplicable.

[5]*History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 174.

[6]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. IV, p. 335. Col. Daniel Updike's inventory also shows 19 slaves. *Geneal. Dictionary of R. I.*, pp. 397–399.

reference to twenty-four negro women working in his dairy,[1] and there are such records of other large holdings not verified by contemporary documents. It may therefore be assumed that Judge Potter's statement that the slaves held by the Planters averaged from five to forty, is correct, in view of the fact that Potter was a historian of proved accuracy and living in the heart of the Narragansett Country, as had his family for generations, he had the unique advantage of acquiring knowledge from original sources. Beside negro slaves, the Planters employed indented servants, generally Mustees and in some cases Indians.[2]

The most lucrative, and certainly the most universally known, commercial effort of the Narragansett Planters on their large estates, was the successful breeding of horses, notably the renowned Narragansett Pacer. The importation of horses to the New England Colonies would appear to have begun within a decade after the settlement at Plymouth,[3] but when they were first received in Rhode Island, and especially into the Narragansett Country, is not clear. The record that William Coddington had, in 1656, shipped a number to the West Indies, is not definite proof that they were from the Colony of Rhode Island, as his transactions were clouded by the accusation of theft.[4] If these horses were from Rhode Island, they were doubtless bred on the island of Rhode Island, certainly not in Narragansett, which at that date had not been settled. The first mention of the Narragansett Country

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[1] *History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 181, quoting J. P. Hazard, who relates that his grandfather was greatly relieved when he reduced the number in his house, "parlour and kitchen" to seventy. The grandfather Hazard referred to was Deputy Governor William Robinson. The accuracy of the statement cannot be proven.

[2] George Hazard employed one Mustee and two Indian indented servants (1738) and Jeremiah Willson's inventory (1749) lists "6 year term in Mustee servant named Jacob £35." There are numerous similar entries in the South Kingstown Probate Records.

[3] Frank Forester (William Henry Herbert), *The Horse of America*, 1857, Vol. I, p. 109. "In 1629 horses and mares were brought into the plantations of Massachusetts Bay by Francis Higginson . . .." The following year about sixty horses were shipped from England. John Winthrop, *History of New England*, Vol. I, p. 368.

[4] *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. I, pp. 337–338. William Brenton is here called "merchant of Boston." He claimed that the horses were "unjustly obtained from him." Although styled "of Boston," Brenton had 399 acres of land on the island of Rhode Island in 1640 and was a freeman of Newport in 1655.

relative to horses is made in 1666 in a letter written by Peleg Sanford, Governor of the Colony from 1680 to 1683, to his uncle Samuel Hutchison, in which he explains that "in Respect of the Extremity of the winter I could not gett your horses from Narragansett, but intend if yor pleasure Soe be to send for them as Soon as the Ketch arrives which we dayly Espect . . ..[1] This letter reveals the fact that within nine years of the date of the Pettaquamscut Purchase, the rich grazing lands of the Narrangansett Country were being utilized.

It is a probability that John Hull was the most interested of the Purchasers in the breeding of horses, and his letters show that he was certainly the first to consider the development and maintenance of a pure strain. Hull was raising horses on his Pettaquamscut lands before 1672, for in that year in a letter to his tenant farmer, Heffernan, he requests that he be sent "a good [riding] beast or two for my own use."[2] Another letter written earlier in the same year shows that Hull's interest in horse breeding was not confined to the Narragansett Country alone, but that he maintained a stock farm near Sandwich.[3] John Hull's interest in the development of a pure strain and its economic advantages is detailed at length in a letter addressed to Benedict Arnold, who would appear to have acted as the secretary of the partners of the Pettaquamscut Purchase. Hull writes: "Sir I have sometimes thought

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[1]Letter Book of Peleg Sanford, R. I. Hist. Soc., 1928, pp. 7–8. The letter is dated May 29, 1666. Sanford had resided in Barbadoes from 1663 to 1664 and upon his return to Newport entered into trade with that island. This letter discredits the statement of Deane Phillips (*Horse Raising in Colonial New England*, Cornell University, Memoir 54, 1922, p. 923), with reference to Governor Sanford's report of 1680, that "the horses mentioned by Governor Sanford were in all probability raised in the northern and eastern parts of Rhode Island, where the country was already in farms before the Narragansett district was settled."

[2]Hull Letter Book, Letter dated September 8, 1672. Further letters to Heffernan *re* horses, pp. 132–133, 337–338 of the transcript.

[3]*Ibid.* A summary of a letter dated April 23, 1672 and addressed to "Steven Sciph," "thanked him for the Enfor[mation] I had w.^{c}h had it come a month soon^{r}. I might have got a vessell to have [ ] off my horses (he said y^{r} was 7 mares & 4 horses) . . . I desired him to mark the Colts y^{t} are not marked . . .." From another letter (transcript, p. 79), it would appear that these horses were "running in ye wilderness Called Wequoisett."

if we the partners of pointe Juda Necke did fence with a good stone wall at the north End thereof that noe kind of horses nor Cattle might gett thereon & allso what other parts thereof westerly were needful & procure a verry good breed of large & fair mares & stallions & that noe mungrell breed might come amonge them & yo^{r} selfe Joel Brenton[1] for his father's interest or M^{r} Sanford[2] in behalfe of them all & any other partner that is able & willing wee might have a verry choice breed for coach horses some for the saddle some for the draught others & in a few years might draw of Considerable numbers & shipp them for Barbados Nevis or such parts of the Indies where they would vend wee might have a vessell made for that service accomodated on purpose to carry of horses to advantage."[3] Thus Hull's sound business sense and foresight outlined a plan which, although there is no evidence that the partners did "fence with a good stone wall," was to be in fact carried out with remarkable financial success during the next century.

As has been mentioned, the report of Governor Sanford states that in 1680 "the principle matters that are exported amongst us is Horses and provisions." At that time it would appear that the type of horse so exported was both for draught and saddle, probably principally the former. While the saddle horse of the seventeenth century was of immediate necessity in the colonies, as all travelling was then done in the saddle and the heavy work generally accomplished by the use of oxen, the draught horse appears to have been greatly in demand in the West Indies. Such exportation for draught purposes would seem to have been mainly to the non-English islands where the sugar mills were turned by horses and not by windmills, as in the English islands. This profitable sale of horses, therefore, would seem to have been directed, not as Hull had expected, to Barbados and Nevis, but to the French islands of Martinique and Guadalupe and to

[1]Jahleel Brenton, son of William Brenton, one of the original partners who died in 1674.

[2]Peleg Sanford, the Governor, who married Mary, eldest child of William Brenton. "Them all" refers to the other, and numerous, Brenton heirs.

[3]Hull Letter Book. Letter dated April 16, 1677, transcript, pp. 335–336.

the Dutch settlements at Surinam,[1] and was to be the cause of numerous complaints to the Home Government in England and, in the end, to result in those restrictive laws which did much to interfere with the Planters' trade.[2]

In the Colonies (as in England at that period[3]), the favorite saddle horse, or "riding beast," as it was generally called, was the pacer, its gait being the least fatiguing to the rider over the rough roads and trails of the early colonial countryside. However, at what time and from what strain the Narragansett Pacer[4] was developed, are, and probably will be forever, facts wrapped in obscurity. "Frank Forester," Wallace, Phillips and Harrison can throw no definite light upon the subject, although the first three advance arguments in support of their theories. All of them discount the legendary origins of the stallion picked up at sea; and of the wild horses found in the Narragansett Country by the first settlers, the first being a rather universal method of explaining away an obscure problem of source, and the second unfounded by fact, as there is no evidence that the Narragansett Indians were familiar with this animal prior to the arrival of the whites.[5] Hazard, who has handed down the most

[1] *Calendar of State Papers*, 1714/15, 654. "for the French at Martinique and Guardalupa, and the Dutch at Sorronam begin to rival us in the sugar trade, and this is owing . . . to the great supplies of horses they frequently receive from New England . . . for as we grind the sugar canes with windmills, so they are necessitated to do it by an engine that's drawn by horses and cattle." Also *Idem*, 1720/21, 197.

[2] The Molasses Act and the Sugar Act.

[3] *The Horse in America*, Vol. II, pp. 70–71. *Horse Raising in Colonial New England*, p. 929.

[4] "They have handsome foreheads, the head clean, the neck long, the arms and legs thin and taper; the hind quarters are narrow and the hocks a little crooked, which is here called sickle hocked, which turns the hind feet out a little; their color is generally, though not always, bright sorrel; they are very spirited and carry both head and tail high." Quoted by Phillips from the first American Edition of the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 336. The pacers were small, of about fourteen hands.

[5] *The Horse in America*, Vol. II, p. 67, and Fairfax Harrison, *The John's Island Stud*, 1931, pp. 159–166. The famous stallion, Old Snip, has been credited, by local tradition, to have been the progenitor of the breed, but as his name has been given to the legendary horse and to the Andalusian stallion, this fact is hardly of assistance. Nevertheless his name was carried on in reference to the Pacer; and in the *North Carolina Journal* (Halifax) on March 11, 1799, in advertising that "Ranger, a full bred Narragansett, will stand at my stable . . . ", there is appended a certificate that Ranger's "grand dam was got by a colt of Young Snip. He is a clean bred Narragansett horse of the true Snip breed . . .." Quoted in *The John's Island Stud*, p. 164. Roger Williams, in his *Key into the Language of America*, R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. I, p. 74, states that the Indians, "Having no horses, they covet them above other cattell . . .."

complete local account of the Pacer, intimates that it was developed from an Andalusian stallion imported by Deputy Governor William Robinson, a theory which Forester would seem to accept.[1] Phillips believes that this "deserves some credence," but adds his belief that the strain might possibly have come from the Irish hobby, a horse of size, gait and color strikingly similar to that of the Narragansett Pacer.[2] Phillips also refutes Wallace's statement claiming the possibility of Andalusian origin, and also his statement that "the Narragansetts were a leading article of export from Rhode Island in 1680, thirteen years before Governor Robinson was born."[3] Phillips' denial of this statement is certainly justified. There is nothing to intimate that those early horses mentioned by Sanford, in his report, were the Narragansett Pacers. Pacers they possibly were and some may have been bred and raised on the rich grazing lands of the Narragansett Country, but it can not be proven that they were of the famous Narragansett breed, nor can the fact that Rhode Island horses were exported to Carolina at an early date be considered as conclusive evidence that this fine breed had then been perfected.[4] However, some light may be thrown on this mooted question by Dr. MacSparran, who stated that in Virginia "they have plenty of a small sort of horses, the best in the world, like the little Scotch Galloways . . . ."[5]

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[1] *The Horse in America*, Vol. II, p. 67. "This beautiful animal . . . was, I think it may be positively asserted, of Andalusian blood."

[2] *Horse Raising in Colonial New England*, p. 923. Phillips omits a fact that might possibly strengthen his argument on this point. The Navigation Act of 1660 required all commodities to the colonies to be laden and shipped in England, which necessitated transhipment of all goods originating outside of that country. Certain exceptions were, however, made; among which were horses from Ireland which could be shipped directly to New England. This also applied to Scotland. Therefore the hobby may have been exported at an early date, as also may have been the Scotch Galloway mentioned by Forester (Vol. I, pp. 29 & 73) and by Dr. MacSparran.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 924.

[4] *The John's Island Stud*, p. 159. Harrison quotes from Samuel Wilson's *Account of the Province of Carolina*, and also states, with reference to Wallace and Phillips, that, "As these authorities did not know that the first horse introduced into Carolina for breeding purposes came from Rhode Island and was soon described as a 'pacing horse,' the testimony from the South, here adduced, becomes more than locally significant." The *South Carolina Gazette*, as early as 1734, advertises "a Rhode Island pacing stallion . . . .."

[5] *America Dissected*, printed in the *History of the Narragansett Church*. Dr. MacSparran also mentions having ridden on "larger pacing horses," a distinction from the smaller Narragansett breed.

There would therefore appear, as has been stated, to be several possible solutions of this problem. It may, however, be reasonably concluded that the Narragansett Pacer, as distinct from the other pacers in the colonies, began to be recognized as the superior breed about the beginning of the eighteenth century.[1] With reference to this, the sound conclusion reached by Fairfax Harrison may be quoted in full: "As no breed of horses (or, indeed, any animal) transmitting inherited characteristics was ever improvised, these testimonies necessarily enforce Wallace's deduction that the Narragansett Pacer was a much older breed than Mr. Hazard had suggested by his statement, made in 1846, that the founder of the breed was imported into Rhode Island from Andalusia by his grandfather, William Robinson (1693–1751). Governor Robinson is shown to have been a breeder of stock about 1746, and may have refreshed the blood by importing an Andalusian horse; but the breed certainly antedates his activities."[2]

It is unfortunate that, in the absence of stud books, contemporary records do not offer very conclusive assistance to this problem. The only entry in the inventories that mentions a pacer is in that of the

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[1]A eonclusion arrived at after eareful examination of sueh loeal data as the dates of settlement in the Narragansett Country; the development of its farms, such early export records as have survived and from the number of horses, irrespeetive of their type, as are listed in the inventories of estates. It would be considered doubtful, therefore, that the earliest Planters and settlers were in a position to undertake the eareful breeding of horses to develop a superior strain prior at least to the last deeade of the seventeenth eentury. Sanford's mention, in his letter dated December 28, 1668, of "avery spesiall good Beast & hath all his paces . . . "would not refer, it would seem, to what was later ealled a "natural pacer," but rather that the word "paces" may be defined as "gaits." *Letter Book of Peleg Sanford*, p. 71. There is no evidenee to show that John Hull's suggestion was earried out, a plan that, it shiould be remembered, included eoaeh and draught as well as saddle horses and the earliest inventory to show an appreeiable number of horses was that of James Wilson in 1705 whieh mentions "31 horse kind."

[2]*The John's Island Stud*, p. 161. The only modifications whieh can be made to this exeellent summary of the ease are: first, that Wallaee placed the date of the development of the Narragansett Paeer too early, basing his statement, as he did, on Governor Sanford's report of 1680, only three years after John Hull made his suggestion and before the larger estates had been built up; and secondly, it may be believed with a degree of eertainty that Governor Robinson was raising stoek for a eonsiderable time prior to 1746. He reeeived his father's estate upon the latter's death in 1716, ineluding 300 aeres of land on Boston Neek, and the land evidenees of South Kingstown show that he had, by purchase and ease, made important additions to his father's large holdings of land by the year 1737.

estate of Ichabod Potter, who died in 1739. Here is listed "one small white pacing horse £6."[1] Other inventories simply make mention of "one trotting mare, one Bay horse;"[2] "10 Horse Kind;"[3] "1 Stallion, 4 young horses; 1 mare & colt, 7 mares & 5 colts, 2 two year old mares, 10 yearling horse kind;"[4] "4 guilding horses, 4 breeding mares & 3 colts, 5 two year & vantage Jaydas, 7 yearling Colts;"[5] "one horse called the Shearman Horse, one trotting mare and her colt, the Easton mare and her colt."[6] Even in the inventory of Deputy Governor Robinson,[7] no particular mention is made of the pacer among the twenty-four horses listed. It is possible, however, that the pacers were not specified as they were the principal "horse kind," and that a distinction, such as Benjamin Hazard's "trotting mare," was made to emphasize an exception.

It is of interest to show here the number of horses listed in the South Kingstown inventories, of a few of the larger estates, indicative of the interest taken by the Planters in their breeding, but not conclusive, as has been stated before, of the maximum number owned by them. James Wilson (1705/6), "31 horse kind;"[8] Rowland Robinson (1716), "64 horses, mares and colts;"[9] William Gardiner (1732), "30 horses and mares and one 'young Stone horse';"[10] and Jeffrey Hazard (1759), "his riding beast" valued at £300, "Sorrel stone horse" at £400, "13 old breeding mares, 3 geldings, 5 three yr. mares and 8 2 yr.," all valued at £2010.[11] William Robinson's inventory shows but

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[1]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. III, p. 103.

[2]*Ibid.* Vol. III, p. 70. George Hazard Estate, 1738.

[3]*Ibid.* Vol. III, p. 156. Jeremiah Willson Estate, 1740.

[4]*Ibid.* Vol. IV, p. 193. George Hazard (son of Thomas) Estate, 1746.

[5]*Ibid.* Vol. IV, p. 231. Jonathan Hazard Estate, 1746/7. The mention of "Jaydas" is interesting and, without a certain contemporary definition of the use of the word, speculative.

[6]*Ibid.* Vol. IV, p. 304. Benjamin Hazard Estate, 1748. The presence of trotting mares is significant of the commencement of the popularity of the trotting horse which was one of the probable causes of the Pacers' decline. *The Horse in America*, Vol. II, p. 72.

[7]*Ibid.* Vol. IV, p. 335.

[8]*Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 23.

[9]*Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 86.

[10]*Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 226.

[11]*Ibid.* Vol. V, p. 107.

twenty-four horses, but he was at one time accredited with forty-three.[1]

The majority of the horses from the pastures of the Planters were shipped, presumably as deck cargo, the holds being stowed with other products, from the port of Newport whence the greater portion of intercolonial and West Indian trade emanated. There are instances, however, of shipment from the docks of the old South Ferry on Boston Neck, where the Honorable Robert Hazard, grandson of the first Robert, is reputed, at one period, to have exported one hundred horses yearly.[2] Although the West Indies would appear to have been the principal market, horses, including the Narragansett Pacer, were sent to the other colonies, especially to those in the South.[3] As has been mentioned, Rhode Island horses were introduced to Carolina at an early date and were advertised extensively in Charleston between 1734 and 1740.[4] Unfortunately, no direct trade between Newport and Virginia can be verified at this period, although it is possible it occasionally occurred.[5] Rhode Island ships did touch at Tide Water landings on their return voyages from the West Indies, but their shipments to this region were hardly of products indigenous to the soil of the Narragansett Country.[6] As there were small

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[1]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. IV, p. 335.

[2]*History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 515, quoting J. P. Hazard who stated that ". . . Robert Hazard raised about a hundred of them annually, and often loaded two vessels a year with them, and other products of the farm, which sailed direct from the South Ferry to the West Indies . . . ."

[3]Substantiated by Dr. MacSparran in his *America Dissected* in his statement with reference to the products of Rhode Island: ". . . and fine horses, that are exports to all parts of the English America." Harrison states that the Narragansett Paeer may have been in Maryland by the middle of the eighteenth century, but the first tangible evidence can not be produced until 1794.

[4]*The John's Island Stud*, pp. 159–161. These advertisements appeared in the *South Carolina Gazette*. Charleston was the principal port with whieh Newport traded during the first half of the eighteenth century.

[5]*The Virginia Gazette*, November 26–December 3, 1736: "Entered in Upper District of James River . . . Sloop Jane of Rhode Island, John Baseomb, Master, from Anguilla." This is the earliest entry noted, and in the numerous subsequent entries, all the Rhode Island ships are entered as from the West Indies.

[6]Harold R. Shurtleff of the Department of Researeh and Reeord of Colonial Williamsburg, Inc. communicates the information that "Our notes show a eolonial trade from Rhode Island in limes, lemons, pineapples and turtles! . . . I presume these somewhat exotie ladings are simply the last stage of some triangular trade." Direct trade between Rhode Island and the York and James Rivers does not appear to have developed to any great extent until after 1763.

pacing horses in Virginia at an early date,[1] it would seem probable that they were imported by the way of Carolina, if they were of the Narragansett breed.

Although there is no certain knowledge of the development of the Narragansett Pacer, there are several plausible explanations of the cause of its extinction in Rhode Island. J. P. Hazard, in his account of the Pacer already mentioned, states that "One of the causes of the loss of that famous breed here, was the great demand for them in Cuba, when the island began to cultivate sugar extensively. The Planters became suddenly rich, and wanted the pacing horses for themselves and their wives and daughters to ride, faster than we could supply them; and sent an agent to this country to purchase them on such terms as he could, but to purchase them at all events. I have heard my father say, he knew the agent very well . . . he never let a good one, that could be purchased, escape him. This, and the fact that they were not so well adapted to draft as other horses, was the cause of their being neglected . . .."[2] However, prior to the arrival of this Cuban agent, there would appear to have been a falling off in pacer breeding, possibly because of the last reason mentioned by Hazard, but also probably due to the increasing difficulties of trade with the French West Indies imposed by England[3] and also because the great estates of the earlier Planters were being divided among their sons.[4] Whatever was the cause, or causes, there is evidence that in 1763 the diminution of this lucrative pursuit was causing serious alarm, and efforts were instituted to revive interest in the breeding of fine horses. To this point the following advertisement was printed:

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[1] *Virginia Gazette*, 1734. In a notice of a horse lost, the description reads: "small bright bay horse . . . paces slow."

[2] *History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 514.

[3] *Horse Raising in Colonial New England*, p. 917. The third paragraph on this page is not only true of the horse trade, but of the Planters' other activities.

[4] To which may be added Hazard's remark: "Horses and the mode of travelling, like everything else, have undergone the change of fashion." Frank Forester states, with reference to this remark, that "The latter reasons . . . are probably the nearest to the truth . . .."

"WHAREAS the best Horses of this Colony have been sent off from Time to Time to the West Indies and elsewhere by which the Breed is much dwindled, to the great Detriment of both Merchant and Farmer; therefore, a number of public-spirited Gentlemen of Newport, for the Good of the Colony, and to encourage the Farmers to breed better Horses for the future, have collected a Purse of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS to be Run for on Thursday, the Fifth of May next, on Easton's Beech, free for any Horse Mare or Gelding bred in the Colony, agreeable to the following articles, viz:

"A Purse of One Hundred Dollars To Be Run for on Thursday the 5th May next on the Course of Easton's Beech, free for any Horse Mare or Gelding bred in the Colony, carrying Weight for Inches; fourteen Hands carries 9 Stone, and for every Inch over or under to carry 7 pounds, agreeable to his Majesty's Articles, the best of three 2 mile Heats paying Two Dollars Entrance, or double at the Post. Proper Certificates of the Places where the Horses were bred, to be produced under the Hands of the Breeders at the Time of Entrance.

"All horses that Run for this Purse, to be entered with Mr. Mathew Couzzins, Merchant in Newport the 2nd of May—not less than three Horses to start for this Purse—The Entrance Money to be run for the next Day, by all Horses except the winning and distanced Horses—The whole to be under the Inspection of three Gentlemen of Newport." *Newport Mercury.*[1]

The race was run, but probably caused little satisfaction to the public spirited gentlemen with an interest in the encouragement of the breeding of better horses. There were only three starters and the winner was "a Horse belonging to Mr. Samuel Gardiner of South Kingstown."[2]

Hazard further states that in 1800 there was only one Narragansett Pacer living in Rhode Island. The

[1]March 28, 1763.

[2]*Newport Mercury*, May 9, 1763.

breed, however, was to be carried on for a few years longer in Connecticut. During the British occupancy at Newport and after the Revolution, the port of New London[1] became the centre of the horse trade and several horsemen of Connecticut would seem to have attempted to carry on the Pacer strain. General Jeremiah Wadsworth of Hartford was a notable example, and Narragansett Pacers from his stable were advertised in Baltimore as late as 1802.[2] Despite this renewed interest, the breed had apparently become extinct by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century[3] and horses bearing names, at a later date, reminiscent of the Narragansett Pacer in his glory, were probably not of the pure "Old Snip breed."

Next in importance to the breeding of horses, cattle and the dairy products from the Narragansett farms were of the greatest value to the Planters, both for domestic use and exportation. The Rhode Island dairy cow[4] was at one time a much sought after breed and was exported in considerable numbers to the other colonies and to the islands of the West Indies.[5] Unfortunately, little can be found with reference to the number of cattle so exported; but from all evidences it would appear that, in the main, the larger proportion of the herds were retained by the Planters for dairy purposes.[6] In the Narragansett Country the largest

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[1]*Horse Raising in Colonial New England*, pp. 917, 926, 927.

[2]Gen. Wadsworth died in 1804. Pacers bred by him were advertised in the *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser* in 1802.

[3]James Fenimore Cooper's statement that the breed was extinct in New England by 1826. The *pure* breed would appear to have been extinguished prior to this, throughout the country.

[4]*Beginnings of Agriculture in America*, pp. 192–193. Carrier believes that there is a probability that these cattle were of Dutch origin, "having been obtained from the Dutch Settlers in the Connecticut Valley or in New Netherland."

[5]William Douglas, *A Summary . . . of the British Settlements in North America*, Boston, 1751, Vol. II, Part I, p. 99, "they export for the West India Islands, Horses, Live Stock of several Kinds . . .." Harrison quotes Thomas Neeve who in 1682 wrote that "The first stock (of cows, the Carolinians) were furnished with from Bermudas and New England . . .." *The John's Island Stud*, p. 160.

[6]*Idem*. p. 100, "The most considerable Farms are in the Narragansett Country. Their highest Dairy of one Farm, *communibus annis*, milks about 110 Cows . . . and sells off considerably in Calves and fatted Bullocks . . . In good Land they reckon after the rate of 2 Acres for a milch Cow."

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estates grazed from one hundred to one hundred and fifty head, according to the inventories. As early as 1705, the inventory of James Wilson shows 72 head of cattle (exclusive of oxen) and in 1718 Rowland Robinson's estate included 56 cows, one bull, "28 2 yr & 20 yr old cattle," "19 3 yr steers & Heifers," 3 calves, 15 oxen and 4 "vantage cattle." William Gardiner (1732) had one hundred and sixty-four head; and Deputy Governor William Robinson (1751) had "26 yearling cattle," 21 2 year cattle and 25 milch cows. Robert Hazard is reputed to have "generally kept" one hundred and fifty cows.[1]

While the number of cattle raised in the Narragansett Country for export purposes is doubtful, there can be no question regarding the dairy products, especially cheese. The Narragansett cheese, the excellence of which is confirmed by numerous contemporary appraisals, by tradition, was said to have been made from the receipt brought to the Colonies by Dame Smith, the wife of Richard Smith, Senior. It was similar to Cheshire cheese and, prior to the Revolution, the use of cream in its preparation gave it "a high character of richness and flavor." This cheese was made in large quantities, and every Planter had at least one cheese house on his estate. As has been mentioned, Robert Hazard was reputed to have had twenty-four women at work in his dairy, producing twelve to twenty-four cheeses a day, the size of which may be guaged by the report that Hazard's second size vat contained about one bushel. Other large producers of cheese were Col. Stanton who "made a great dairy," and Rowland Robinson, the younger, whose rich lands allowed him to average two pounds of cheese a cow a day. On the former Sewall farm on Point Judith Neck the yearly production was 13,000

[1]That some were exported via Newport is shown, in the year 1748, in the petition of John Gardiner to be permitted to establish a ferry, in which the following reasons are presented: "that the inhabitants, trade and commerce of this colony have so far increased . . . that the ferries established on the Narragansett shore . . . are not sufficient . . . the boats often being crowded with men, women, children, horses, hogs, sheep and cattle to the intolerable inconvenience, annoyance and delay of men and business." *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. V, p. 242.

pounds, and that of Nathaniel Hazard, 9,200 pounds.[1] Earlier, the inventories must be referred to, to indicate the amount of cheese which these Planters produced. Rowland Robinson[2] (1716) left 140 cheeses, his son, William Robinson (1751) four thousand pounds[3] and Jonathan Hazard (1746/7) "to Cheese in the great Chamber Great Bed Room £100."[4]

The Narragansett cheese was widely exported to both the West Indies and the American colonies. Benjamin Franklin advertised it for sale in his shop in Philadelphia[5] and it was in high repute in Boston, to which port great quantities were shipped. The account book of Elisha Reynolds, of Little Rest, merchant as well as Planter, contains entries which show the amount of cheese which he purchased to be resold, principally in Boston: "September 15, 1767. Received of Elisha Reynolds the full and just sum of thirty-nine hundred and thirty-nine pounds twelve shillings it being in old tenner it being in full for 9849 weight of chees Rec from me, Stephen Champlin." Another receipt from William Knowles is in payment of "nine hundred and forty-eight pounds old tenner" for cheese.[6] A further encouragement to the production of cheese was given during several periods of the colonial days, by its being receivable in payment of rent.[7]

Butter would also appear to have been exported, but was probably never a major item. There are also numerous references to hides and these were not only exported, but in view of the several tanneries in the

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[1]*History of the Narragansett Church*, pp. 179–182, quoting J. P. Hazard: "College Tom," pp. 78–79, Hazard made 3627 pounds in 1754 which he sold to James Helme at 3/ a pound, totaling £545:17:0. The weight of his cheeses is evidenced when, in 1756, he sold 28 cheeses, weighing 2830 pounds or about one hundred pounds a cheese.

[2]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. I, p. 86.

[3]*Ibid.* Vol. IV, p. 335.

[4]*Ibid.* Vol. IV, p. 231. Hazard would seem to have strange ideas about convenient storage places for his products. Beside the unusual place where his cheese was kept, the inventory shows that there were "some oats in the westward Chamber" to the value of six pounds.

[5]Bernard Fay, *Franklin*, 1929, p. 142. Franklin called it "Rhode Island Cheese."

[6]Manuscript receipt book from among the papers of Judge Elisha R. Potter.

[7]Not alone cheese, for many other commodities are shown, from old leases, to have been willingly received in lieu of money.

Narrangansett Country, it is certain that a large proportion was retained for domestic use.

Sheep were introduced into the New England Colonies at an early date and because of the nature of the lands in the colony of Rhode Island, they would soon appear to have become very largely held. William Harris in his report dated in the year 1675,[1] makes the statement that in Newport "there are more sheep than anywhere in New England." The settlement of the Narragansett Country with its stony upland pastures soon, however, was to prove more suitable than the island of Rhode Island, and to become the greatest sheep country in the colony. This increase, not only in the Narragansett Country, but in New England as a whole, quickly came under the eye of the Home Government, which saw in the production of such great quantities of wool, a very probable danger to her most important industry and her greatest export. As a result, in 1699 the Wool Act was passed, the stringent provisions of which prohibited the export of wool out of the Colonies, the export of wool between Colonies and, in some instance, between sections of an individual colony—a law which hampered and restricted but apparently did not prevent the traffic in wool. This is shown in the numerous reports which were sent by the colonial agents of the Council of Trade and Plantations. "The growth of the woollen manufactures in New England should be suppressed," wrote Vaughan; and later he suggested that "encouragement should be given to the exportation of timber for the navy, to thereby divert their thoughts from the woollen manufactures, in wch. they have already made too great a proficiency."[2] A more detailed report was sent the following year,[3] which stated that "We observe that the people of the Northern Continent of America not having sufficient returns of their own production for

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[1] *Calendar of State Papers*, 1675–1676, 543. *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. II, p. 129. "In this Province, also, is the best English grasse, and most sheep . . . ewes ordinarily bringing two lambs . . . ." Report of King's Commissioners, 1665.

[2] *Ibid.* 1715–1716, 389, 546.

[3] *Ibid.* 1716–1717, 515.

the goods sent them from Great Britian have been of late years under a necessity of applying themselves very much to the woolen, linnen and other manufactures, in order to cloath themselves to the great disadvantage of the Trade of this Kingdom and we do not see how the same can be prevented otherways than by engaging them to turn their thoughts and industry another way to their own profit." The following year Cummings, in a report, makes the suggestion that it be "proper to allow the inhabitants to pay their taxes and quit rents to the Crown in hemp, waterrolled, bright and clean."[1] Hemp, as well as timber, was desirable for the English navy; and despite a large bounty offered, these devices "to turn their thoughts" were of little success.

There were sizable flocks of sheep in the Narragansett Country before the end of the seventeenth century.[2] The inventories of the first years of the following century show James Willson's estate including 200 sheep, in 1705,[3] and that of Robert Hanna, one year later, 154 sheep.[4] Ten years later (1716) the inventory of Rowland Robinson lists 629[5] sheep, ewes and lambs; and from that time on there are continued evidences of flocks of increasing size, to reach, by record, close to one thousand. The traditional flock of Robert Hazard, numbering four thousand, must be accepted with caution; but it is doubtless true that there were several flocks greatly exceeding the inventory maximum.

Despite the stringent Wool Act, much more wool must have been shorn from these large flocks than

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[1]*Calendar of State Papers*, 1717–1718, 620. Cummings' report is interesting in that he says that "there may be 100,000 weight of wool annually in this Province (Massachusetts) and Rhode Island but it is difficult to know the exact quantity." The colonists were beginning their education in deception and in evasions of England's laws, in which they were later to become past masters. Cummings further remarks that "As to what quantity is exported it is done with such privacy that it is difficult to find out," but he believes it to be considerable. Also *Idem*. 1719-1720, 270.

[2]The first entry of sheep marks, registered in the South Kingstown records, was dated 1696, when twelve men were granted marks.

[3]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. I, p. 23.

[4]*Ibid*. Vol. I, p. 32.

[5]*Ibid*. Vol. I, p. 86.

could possibly be made into "shalloons, serges, stuffs, drugets and kersies" for domestic wear. As the colonists were not a wasteful people it can, therefore, naturally be concluded that some quantities of wool were exported,[1] thereby filling their homespun pockets with the results of smuggling much surplus wool, and incidentally avoiding the higher costs of imported clothing. Wool is often mentioned in the inventories as, for example, in that of the estate of George Hazard (1738) where four hundred and fifty-five pounds are listed. The production of this wool naturally resulted in the building of fulling mills, the date of the first establishment of which, in the Narragansett Country is, however, unrecorded. In the year 1719 Col. George Hazard and Harry Gardiner gave to Thomas Culverwell, "late of Norrage, Connecticut, but now of Kingstown," for love and good will, but "more especially for ye promoting of ye woolen manufacturing which may be for my benefit and the public good," a tract of land situated about half a mile north of the former hamlet of Mooresfield,[2] on the Saugatucket River, for the erection of a fulling mill. At the same time Gardiner granted to Culverwell "full powers to make a dam over said river upon his land said dam being for the promoting of a fulling mill and ye fulling of cloth.[3] In later years other fulling mills were built and the manufacture of woolen goods is still an important industry in the region. Large flocks of sheep alone would seem to have survived the other activities

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[1]A statement made in spite of Dr. MacSparran's remark in *America Dissected*, that although "I mentioned wool as one of the productions of this colony, but although it is pretty plenty where I live, yet, if you throw the English America into our point of view, there is not half enough to make stockings for the inhabitants."

[2]Mooresfield lies about two miles east of the village of Kingstown. The old fulling mill has gone, as have the old saw mill and Rodman's Mill, both situated in or near Mooresfield. There is evidence of an even earlier fulling mill in the deed from Kenyon to Smith, dated 1702/3. North Kingstown Land Evidence, Vol. I, p. 73. This mill was situated at the head of the Pettaquamscut River, near to the present site of the Stuart snuff mill.

[3]Caroline E. Robinson. *The Hazard Family of Rhode Island*, 1895, p. 10. Carding and spinning of wool was mainly done in the homes as was the weaving also. The material so woven was then taken to a fulling mill to be finished, i.e. cleansed and thickened. Dr. MacSparran in his *Diary*, p. 66, notes the he "called at Davis ye Fuller's pd him for scowring and pressing Flannel . . . " Flax was also prepared and the linen spun and woven in the homes.

of the Narragansett Planters, and were maintained in South Kingstown to within comparatively recent years.

In the way of agriculture, the Planters raised Indian corn, rye and other "small grains," and also hemp, flax, and tobacco. The Narragansett Indians had long grown this white corn on their cleared lands, and from them the first settlers received instruction in the best methods for its successful cultivation.[1] It was early adopted as the bread grain of the colony, especially in the Narragansett Country, where wheat, barley and oats were not satisfactory crops.[2] Therefore, within a few years after the settlement of the Narragansett Country, several grist mills were built, the numerous streams in the neighborhood providing suitable power to turn the water wheels.[3] From this white corn meal were made the famous jonny cakes, still prepared in practically all the present-day kitchens of the old township of Kingstown.[4] That some corn, and possibly also meal, was exported, is known; but never, it would seem, in sufficient quantities for it to be classed with such major products as horses, cheese and cattle, the Planters growing for home consumption, for themselves and for their stock.[5]

A considerable quantity of hemp was cultivated,

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[1]The Indians not only taught the early settlers the cultivation of Indian corn, but also supplied them with quantities from their own stores, a fact which, in several instances, kept the colonists from the sufferings of famine experienced in several other settlements. *Beginnings of Agriculture in America*, p. 189. That the ground was suitable for corn is shown in the 1665 report (See note 1, page 38) which states that ". . . corn yields eight for one, and in some places, they have had come twenty-sixe years together without manuring."

[2]*Ibid*, p. 192. Carrier states that "Wheat, barley and oats are very unsatisfactory crops in the Narragansett Country. Rye does best of all small grains. Frequent fogs during the spring and summer promote growth of rusts and other diseases to the utter ruin of wheat and oats and abundant rains make harvesting precarious."

[3]The deposition of Samuel Teft states that ". . . the mill . . . belonging to Elisha Cole in Kingstown . . . and is Upwards of Sixty Since I helped build Said Mill." The deposition is dated 1721 so that it would appear that Teft helped build the mill prior to 1661, four years after the Pettaquamscut Purchase. The great mill stones of these mills turned slowly, grinding the corn without parching it by undue friction. In these impatient days, Indian corn is often ground by steam power, or where water power is retained, by the substitution of a turbine for the old wheel; and the meal suffers by the increased speed, and resultant heat, of the stones.

[4]*Jonny*, never *Johnny*. This word is supposed to be derived from *journey:* journey cakes being cakes prepared to supply sustenance for the traveller.

[5]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. IV, p. 308. The inventory of Benjamin Hazard (1748) shows Indian corn to the value of £100.

although not as much as the English Government would have wished. Early in the colonial days,[1] England had looked to the Northern Colonies to supply the home country with two very necessary commodities for the supply and maintenance of her navy and merchant marine; timber for masting and construction, and hemp for cordage. So anxious was England to encourage a trade in these commodities, and as has previously been mentioned, thereby in a measure to divert the minds of the colonists from wool, that she later placed a substantial bounty on hemp.[2] This bounty was partially successful, but as colonial commerce was in the main with the southern islands and not overseas; and as, furthermore, a great quantity of hemp was retained at home for use in the increasing shipbuilding industry, this bounty never caused the exportation of this commodity to England to achieve the desired proportions. Even with these encouragements the Planters never appear to have raised any great quantity,[3] although there is evidence of small amounts in many cases, the largest being listed in the inventory of Henry Knowles (died 1740) of Little Rest Hill, which appears as seventy-six pounds of "Hemp not Swingled" and twenty-four pounds of "hakkled tow."

The Planters also grew flax for the weaving of linen and the oil derived from the seeds. An interesting account of the use of a flaxseed press for quite different purposes, is to be found in one of the depositions relative to trial of a group of counterfeiters, in 1770.[4] In

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[1]*Calendar of State Papers*, 1714–1715, 508. "Hemp we yet raise but little of, and I am at a loss to say the reason for its certain we have soil that will bear it, a climate not unkind . . ." and "royal favors" are suggested for the encouragement of its cultivation.

[2]*Ibid.* 1716–1717, 508. States that the bounty on hemp at £6 per ton is sufficient. Hemp was also received (1721) by the Treasurer of the Colony of Rhode Island in payment of interest in the "Second Bank" of Bills of Credit. Elisha R. Potter and Sydney S. Rider, *Some Account of the Bills of Credit or Paper Money of Rhode Island*, p. 18. The same authorities state that in 1731 colonial bounties were enacted "for the Encouragement of Hempen Manufactury . . of Great Advantage and Benefit to Great Britain our Mother Country . . ." and nine pence a pound declared as a bounty (pp. 31–32).

[3]The largest growers of hemp would appear, from the list of bounties paid in 1733, to have been in the northern portion of the colony.

[4]In the records of the Superior Court at the Court House in Kingston.

the deposition of Samuel Willson, Jr., it is stated that "last winter Samuel Willson[1] made a great Screw to press the Flaxseed as he pretended . . ." but this young man appeared somewhat abashed, "when they had taken out what was under the Screw, he heard a jangling like the Sound of Dollars . . .." His father afterwards testified that "the large Iron Screws in his Chamber was made chiefly with Design to press out Lintseed Oyl & other medecin." However, as in the case of the cultivation of hemp, the largest flax growers would appear to have had their farms, not in the Narragansett Country, but in the northern part of the Colony.[2]

That tobacco was grown by the Planters is certain, but in what amount or with what success is a matter for conjecture. It was certainly grown by the Narragansett Indians[3] and therefore, as in the case of corn, there is not the slightest doubt but that the early settlers commenced to cultivate it under their tutelage. It would furthermore seem that this must have been continued in the Narragansett Country, as otherwise the erection of the snuff mill at the head of the Pettaquamscut River and the importation of the Stuart family from Scotland by Dr. Thomas Moffat and his associate,[4] would hardly have been a practical venture, had there not been a sufficient crop for their needs in the neighborhood. One Planter who may be believed to have grown tobacco, was Thomas Potter, whose

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[1]The deponent's father. The Willsons were descendants of the Pettaquamscut Purchaser of that name. Samuel Willson, Senior, lived in South Kingstown, on or near Tower Hill. The leading spirit in this enterprise to "make money" would have appeared to be Samuel Casey, the outstanding silversmith.

[2]*Some Account of the Bills of Credit or Paper Money of Rhode Island*, p. 78. In 1733 the colony paid a tax on 19,013 pounds of flax, the largest grower being Jonathan Sprague of what is now the township of Smithfield.

[3]*Key into the Language of America*, p. 35. "They generally all take Tobacco; and it is commonly the only plant which men labor in; the women managing all the rest . . .."

[4]North Kingstown Land Evidence. In 1751 "Edward Cole of Newport, Thomas Moffitt, M.D., of Newport, and Gilbert Stuart, of North Kingstown enter into articles of copartnership to manufacture snuff and to erect a mill at Pettaquamscut." This was Gilbert Stuart the elder, father of the celebrated painter. This mill having been restored in working condition, is open to the public. Another snuff mill was situated nearby, at Hamilton, at a later date and there is believed to have been a third in the neighborhood.

inventory lists "twenty-six pounds of tobacco," not a great amount but possibly significant.[1]

Despite the fact that "the Narragansett Country or King's province" was specifically mentioned in the Act of 1710,[2] providing for the marking with the Broad Arrow all "white and other sort of Pine-Tree" suitable in size for the masting of Her Majesty's Navy,[3] it is not apparent that timber formed an important export from the Narragansett Country. As will be remembered, when the first settlers came, they found the country cleared for several miles back from the coast. Timber was therefore scarce, unless some means of transportation could be provided to transport it from the "wilderness" in the western part of the colony. This situation and the probable lack of oxen, "caused Richard Smith Senior to transport the timbers for his home 'in the English style' at Cocumscussuc, from Taunton."

When timber became available, some ships were built and loaded with timber and the ship and cargo sold to the English navy, but with the increase of agriculture and stock farming, the colonists of Rhode Island turned their labors to their own benefits and built ships for use in their own commerce.[4] Therefore,

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[1]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. II, p. 109.

[2]An Act for the Preservation of White and other Pine Trees . . . *Anno Nono Annae Reginae.*

[3]Robert Greenhalgh Albion's *Forest and Sea Power*, 1926, contains an exhaustive study of this subject. How much timber was so marked in the Narragansett Country, thereby becoming Her Majesty's property, is unknown; but in the other colonies, the sacred rights of the Crown were often disregarded, especially by the owners of the lands upon which the trees grew and who naturally resented this official interference with their title.

[4]*Beginnings of Agriculture in America*, pp. 280–281. "The rapid development of agriculture in Rhode Island soon produced a surplus of foodstuffs in that colony which enabled the plantation owners to turn to other activities. Shipbuilding was one of the first of these added enterprises . . . and Rhode Island plantation owners began to compete in the carrying trade of the world, much to the concern of the mother country. This commerce reacted to the benefit of the agriculture of the Colony." Naturally much lumber was used for the building of homes. A great deal of this lumber was cut in the Cedar Swamp, adjoining Worden's Pond and floated to an open bit of ground on its northern shore where it was then hewn and cut and framed, and often numbered, to save the transportation of the excess. This lot has for generations been known as the Landing or Framing Lot.

R. I. Col Rec., Vol. VI, p. 576. At a later date (1767) the number of acres of woodland in South Kingstown was estimated at 13,198 acres and its value set at £28,783/7/6, exceeding all other townships in value of timber. Smithfield was next with more acreage but valued at about £10,000 less. Most of these woodlands were in the western portion of the township.

although some timber reached the shipyards of Antigua and the other islands of the West Indies, the bulk of that which was suitable for marine purposes was retained for the yards at Newport or for the two or more situated in the Narragansett Country. One of these shipyards was situated on the western bank of the Pettaquamscut River at the foot of Tower Hill and another, of which more information is available, on the eastern shore of Boston Neck, on the farm once owned by Thomas Hazard, son of the first Robert. In 1739 he gave the land to his son Jonathan, who in turn, prior to the year 1746, deeded one half of it to his brother George Hazard, together with one half interest of the pier and one half interest of the warehouses and shipyard.[1] Possibly at this yard was built the Sloop *Kingstown*, of which Benjamin Hazard was part owner, and regarding which "Fones Hazard" testified that she "was built at South Kingstown in Rhode Island in 1739.[2] Whether the Sloop *Kingstown* was built at the Hazard yards or not, there is at least evidence that two of the Planters undertook the "added enterprise" of shipbuilding, and it is of interest to note that in the inventory of Jonathan Hazard (1746/7) is listed the following item: "½ boat, ½ sails & ½ the Rigging £080";[3] the other halves, presumably belonging to his brother George.

As the Narragansett Planter lived, in the main, off his own lands and depended but little upon the importations from other colonies, or abroad, for the necessities of life, it is to be expected that the inventories would abound in the enumeration of such domes-

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[1]*The Hazard Family in Rhode Island*, p. 8. Whether this pier and shipyard was built by Thomas or by his son Jonathan is not evident.

[2]The Case of Benjamin Hazard, and others v. John Rons: "To be heard before the Right Honorable the Lords of the Committee of his Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council, at the Council Chamber at the Cockpit, Whitehall" in 1748. The cause of the case was that "The said Sloop *Kingstown*, Burthen about 100 Tons, . . . having been out on a trading Voyage, in her Return home from *Leogan*, a *French* Settlement in *Hispaniola*, to *Newport* in *Rhode* Island was . . . attacked, seized, and taken, on the 18th of March 1741 . . . by a Bilander *British* Private Ship of War, called the *Young Eagle*, Captain *Rous* Commander . . . ." From a copy of "The Case of the Appellants in the Original and Respondents in the Cross Appeal" in the New York Public Library.

[3]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. IV, p. 231.

tic animals and fowls as hogs,[1] goats, turkeys, "geeses" and "dunghill fowles," besides the mention of several hives of bees, but one is not prepared to find, in the inventory of George Hazard in 1746,[2] the unusual entry of seven deer. The question as to whether Hazard maintained a deer park on his estate, may be left to the imagination, for further the inventory and, strangely, tradition, sayeth not.

Edward Channing has stated that he did not find tenable the claim made that the progenitors of the Narragansett Planters "were superior in birth and breeding to the other New England Colonists," and "that to this, the aristocratic form of the Narragansett Society is due."[3] This is in the main correct, with possibly one or two exceptions, but it is made in refutation of a claim that no responsible person has ever made. However, Channing's further statement, in substantiation of the preceding argument, that "the proportion of those who wrote their names in early Narragansett is smaller than in the surrounding colonies,"[4] betrays a somewhat querulous attitude and is a conclusion that could not be accurately arrived at without exhaustive, and exhausting, research and tabulation. Furthermore, it has been shown that the fact that a man makes his mark, cannot be accepted as conclusive evidence of his inability to write his name, the mark especially when made in the form of a cross,

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[1]It is quite possible that swine were exported, as they were a valuable animal in the colonies. The Narragansett Planters do not appear to have interested themselves in the exportation of fish to the Catholic countries of Europe, which reached a considerable volume in other parts of Rhode Island and in the other colonies. Fish there were a plenty near at hand, but they would appear to have caught them for their own table, rather than to be dried and salted for export. Nor is there record that the whaling industry attracted them; although the bounties paid by the Colony on whalebone and whale oil were of considerable amount.

[2]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. IV, p. 193.

[3]*The Narragansett Planters*, p. 6. Such families as the Updikes and the Willetts had a background of wealth and education of a superior degree.

[4]*Ibid.* Channing somewhat modifies this extraordinary statement by adding: "It will not do to lay too much stress on these facts." Many years spent in the examination of seventeenth century documents relating to the Narragansett Country, has never disclosed an undue number of marks as signatures, but rather the reverse. All the Pettaquamscut Purchasers signed their names. The Atherton Purchasers, with the exception of Smith who wrote, not being Rhode Island men, could of course not be included, if such a remarkable comparative census was ever made.

having been used in England in lieu of a seal or to give added emphasis and weight to the act of signing,[1] a custom that may well have survived in the Colonies. However, it cannot, and should not, be asserted that the ancestors of the Planters were superior, nor that the Planters themselves were above the other colonists. Nevertheless, they were in the main of the better class, and certainly the members of the Pettaquamscut Purchase and of the Atherton Company were men of prominence in their respective communities, where they held both civil and military offices; men of substance and sound education and, in at least one case, with exceptional social advantages. Furthermore, many, in fact the majority, of the men to whom the Purchasers sold land, were above the yeoman class. Henry Bull, father of Jireth Bull, was for several years Deputy and for three years Governor of the Colony, and the Willett family was one of outstanding position.

To this type of colonist, because of the increasing wealth they received from their lands, augmented by the almost autocratic power which they held,[2] it was natural that there should come a desire to better their cultural and intellectual status and further attain those amenities of life that their prosperity, and comparative leisure, made possible, and it was, therefore, to the town of Newport that they turned for this enlightenment.

Newport, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, had already commenced to emerge from the status of a strictly mercantile town, and by its increasing wealth and its contacts with the outside world, was laying the

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[1]Charles Sisson, *Marks as Signatures*, The Library, Trans. of the Bibliographical Society, New Series, Vol. IX, No. 1, London, 1928. "With the spread of literacy the written signature, first as accompaniment, then as substitute, replaced the seal . . . Meanwhile the cross remained as a mark of presence, of agreement or of agency, amounting to a seal for those who had no seal . . .." Also "In early Moravian charters of the seventh century, autograph signatures are sometimes accompanied by a cross of the writer's making."

[2]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. II, p. 113. It was necessary for one to have a competent estate to be admitted as a Freeman. In 1729 this "competent estate" was set at the large sum of £200 or an annual value of £10. Due to depreciated currency this was increased to £400 in 1742. Eldest sons of Freemen were, *ipso facto*, possessed of the right to vote. As will be seen, these laws tended to establish an autocratic ruling class in which the Planters were to receive leadership by their wealth.

foundations for its position as the center of the liberal arts in the colonies.[1] Freed from the almost pietistic attitude towards life and letters existent in the other New England colonies, Newport left "theology to the theologians" which, in this Rhode Island city, was of a greater breadth of tolerance and understanding than would have been able to survive in the more rarified atmosphere of Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut. This broadening of cultural aspect was greatly influenced by the fact that Newport was assuming the position of the first watering place in the Colonies; a favorite summer resort for the Planters of the West Indies, who were shortly to be followed by the Carolinians from Charleston and, at a later date, by the ubiquitous Philadelphians who, it has been noted, came later and left earlier, as they were men of business rather than Planters.[2] Stimulus was added to this development, in what might be termed the humanities, by the arrival, during the winter of 1729/30 of George Berkeley, Dean of Derry, and afterwards Bishop of Cloyne. Berkeley was much impressed with Newport: "It is pretty and pleasantly situated," he wrote to a friend, "I was never more agreeably surprised than at the sight of the town and its harbour."[3] Berkeley remained on the island of Rhode Island for about three years, where he purchased a farm and built his home, "Whitehall" near Newport, in which town, it is commonly believed, he was responsible for the founding of the Philosophical Society,[4] subsequently to become,

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[1]Edward Field, Ed., *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century*, Vol. II, p. 616. The first public library in the Colony, established in Newport in 1700 was, however, a parochial library founded by Rev. Thomas Bray of the Church of England. It was made up of books mainly of theological nature, although divided into selections for the clergy and for the layman.

[2]Carl Bridenbaugh, *Colonial Newport as a Summer Resort*, R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll., Vol. XXVI, no. 1, pp. 1–23. As early as 1729 Antiguans arrived in Newport for their health. The most accurate records are to be found in the *Newport Mercury* (founded in 1758), after 1767, when that newspaper commenced to print lists of summer arrivals. However, by 1730 it appears that many Carolinians and also Philadelphians had "discovered the charm of Newport."

[3]A. C. Fraser, *Works of George Berkeley, D.D.*, Oxford, 1871, Vol. IV, p. 160.

[4]Among the founders of the Society was Edward Scott, a grand-uncle of Sir Walter Scott, but it remained for a Narragansett Planter, Daniel Updike, to be the first signer of the constitution. (*Memoirs of R. I. Bar*, pp. 60–61.)

under the patronage of Abraham Redwood, the Redwood Library.[1] With Berkeley came several friends, including John Smibert,[2] the English artist, whom the Dean had met in Italy, and who was to have considerable influence in shaping the artistic appreciations of the wealthy merchants of Newport. Berkeley was a frequent visitor to the Narragansett Country, becoming a close friend, not only of Dr. MacSparran, but also of Daniel Updike. On one of his visits, when accompanied by Smibert, who was also greatly interested in the Indians, he is believed to have stayed for a considerable time with MacSparran, and it is supposed that it was during this visit that Smibert painted the portraits of the Doctor and his wife.[3] But it was not only to study the Indians that Berkeley visited the Narragansett Country. His original plan in coming to the colonies had been the establishment of a college in Bermuda, and it has never been quite clear why the Dean came to Rhode Island first, and having come there, remained.[4] He still, however, had the college uppermost in his mind and while in the Narragansett Country selected two possible sites. One was on Hammond Hill, overlooking the Pettaquamscut River and just above the Gilbert Stuart Mill, often described as "Berkeley's College Reservation"; and the other, which the Dean considered of "unrivalled prospect," on Barber's Heights, with a magnificent view of the Narragansett Bay.[5] Many of the Planters must have made the acquaintance of this learned Dean, especially

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[1]Incorporated in 1747. The building was designed by Peter Harrison, supposed to have been a pupil of Sir John Vanburgh. He came to Newport in 1740 and remained there until 1761, when he removed to New Haven, although he designed the Synagogue in Newport, built in 1762/3. *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. VIII, p. 347.

[2]*The Works of George Berkeley, D.D.*, p. 153. Others in the party were Mrs. Berkeley, Miss Hancock, John James and Richard Dallon.

[3]*History of the Narragansett Church*, pp. 522–523.

[4]*Works of George Berkeley*, Vol. IV, p. 155. Fraser believes that he intended to come to the colony of Rhode Island first in order to purchase land there "as an investment for Bermuda."

[5]J. M. Hone and M. M. Rosse, *Bishop Berkeley*, London, 1931, p. 146. "Thus it seems that he had in mind three places for his College, two in the Narragansett Country and the other in Newport itself." "Tara Hill," mentioned in this connection, is Tower Hill, an error made probably because of the local pronunciation of the word "Tower."

at the home of Doctor MacSparran[1] who was ever a cordial host to his neighbors and parishioners, and also at the home of Daniel Updike, where Berkeley was a welcomed and frequent guest. Therefore, Newport at one time regarded by the Planters, in the main, as a convenient market and port of export for the produce of their lands, became their social centre as well, and the benefits which they derived from this contact with the society of this town, probably more cosmopolitan in thought than any in the colonies[2] at that period, was to have a marked influence upon their lives.

It is true, as Channing has taken pains to point out, that there were no common schools in the King's Province until after the Revolution, if by "common schools" can be understood public schools in the American meaning of the words.[3] There were, however, pay schools in the Narragansett Country many years prior to that war,[4] and schools on the island of Rhode Island, from whence many of the Planters' families originated, even before the beginning of the eighteenth century.[5] But this absence of schools for public instruction was not evidence of the lack of education of the sons of the early generations of Planters, sons who were to become the men who made this unique society what it was. Dr. MacSparran received pupils, among whom was Thomas Clapp, later to become President of Yale

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[1]*The MacSparran Diary*, p. XXVIII. In later years Dr. MacSparran would seem, probably through failing health, to have become more easily tired by his numerous guests, for he notes in his *Diary* that he has 12 visitors, "all here at once . . . so much company fatigues me at one time."

[2]*Colonial Newport as a Summer Resort*, p. 2. "When Bishop Berkeley landed, in 1729, he was greeted by the Redwoods of Antigua, the De Courcys of Ireland, the Bretts of Germany and the Scotts of Scotland."

[3]*The Narragansett Planters*, p. 6. To which statement is added: "Still, if lack of education meant anything in the middle of the seventeenth century, it shows that the fathers of North and South Kingstown were not above the average of New England colonists." Quite true, they were not and never should be so claimed; but they were not in the Narragansett Country until after the "middle of the seventeenth century; and when they did come, they came from Massachusetts, Connecticut and from the island of Rhode Island."

[4]William Davis Miller, *The Samuel Sewall School Land and the Kingston Academy*, 1930, p. 5. There was a school in Little Rest prior to 1759. Samuel Sewall, son-in-law of John Hull, the Pettaquamscut Purchaser, gave land in 1695, the avails of which were to be used for a school, but they were not so utilized until about 1781.

[5]The first schoolhouse was in existence in 1685.

College; Dr. John Checkley,[1] a graduate of Oxford University, tutored several of the Planters' sons; and Col. Daniel Updike received instructions in the classics and in French under the tutelage of Daniel Vernon, "an able French instructor,[2] the father of Samuel Vernon, the silversmith, whose craftsmanship is still esteemed today. Another example was that of Sylvester Gardiner, son of "Wicked Will" who, upon the advice of Dr. MacSparran, was sent to Boston and, later, to England and to France to finish his education.[3]

Education received under men of such knowledge and breadth of experience, coupled with the possible contacts with society of Newport, naturally created, for some of the Planters, an interest in art and literature. Several small but well chosen libraries, remarkable for the period and for the countryside, were collected. Col. Updike, at his house at Cocumscussuc, Dr. MacSparran at the Glebe, and later, Matthew Robinson[4] at "Hopewell," are known to have owned and enjoyed a considerable collection of books. Contemporary with Robinson, Elisha R. Potter began to build up a library, to be greatly added to by his son of the same name, and eventually to become the largest private library in the old South County.[5] Further than an expression of interest in literature was the Planter's desire to surround himself with the best examples of the work of the artists and the craftsmen of his period. Exceptionally fine pieces of mahogany and walnut furniture from the workshops of Goddard and of Townsend of Newport and, in some instances, from those of Boston and Philadelphia cabinet makers,

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[1] *History of the Narragansett Church*, pp. 205–211. This is a short sketch of Checkley's life. Checkley was the rector of King's Church, in Providence, for ten years from about 1738, and it is probable that at this time he came to the Narragansett Country.

[2] *Memoirs of the R. I. Bar*, p. 37, and *The Gen. Dict. of R. I.*, p. 402.

[3] *Hist. of the Narragansett Church*, pp. 126–127.

[4] *South Kingstown Probate Records*, Vol. VI, p. 327 (1795). The inventory of Matthew Robinson contains a list of his books. It was a general collection and although theology is represented in a considerable number of volumes, literature, history, law and husbandry are included.

[5] Despite partial dispersion, still a large library. Books belonging to other Planter families are to be found in this collection: as the Helmes, Hazards and books from the library of Deputy Governor Robinson.

survive; often having remained in the same family since their original purchase.[1] Their silver, of which a liberal amount is shown in the inventories, was wrought, mainly, by such craftsmen as Vernon, Clarke and Otis of Newport,[2] and by the Planters' own master craftsman, albeit rogue, Samuel Casey of Little Rest.[3] "Wicked Will" Gardiner died possessed of "Rought plate"[4] to the value of over ninety pounds and by will left £700 to his daughter Hannah, wife of Dr. MacSparran, £100 of which were to be laid out in plate.[5] The greatest amount of silver is listed in the inventory of the estate of Deputy Governor William Robinson,[6] as "4 silver porringers £95," and "To Silver in the bowfatt in the Great Room £274/8." The Planters took advantage of the presence of excellent artists in Newport and Boston, such as Smibert, Blackburn, Copley and Stuart, and commissioned them to paint the "likeness" of members of their families.[7]

It is a great misfortune that few of the great homes of the Narragansett Planters stand today, but decay and the Atlantic gales have taken their toll, leaving only the traces of the foundations or massive stone chimneys as evidences of their generous proportions, the more remarkable when it is to be considered that

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[1]As well as work of Boston and English silversmiths of an early period, and later examples from Philadelphia and New York.

[2]William Davis Miller, *Silversmiths of Little Rest*, Kingston, 1928, pp. 3–9. There were four silversmiths in this little town prior to the Revolution, two of whom, Casey and Waite, showed outstanding ability. This is an important proof of the prosperity of the surrounding country.

[3]As an example, the fine furniture, china and silver of the Updike family, including the silver "coffee pot" presented to Daniel Updike as a token of friendship by Bishop Berkeley, is now in the house of a direct descendant, Daniel Berkeley Updike. This also is true of the Potter and Hazard families.

[4]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. II, p. 226, dated 1732.

[5]*Ibid.* Gardiner made a similar bequest to his daughter.

[6]*Ibid*, p. 335.

[7]Besides the portraits of Dr. MacSparran and his wife by John Smibert, already mentioned, there are in existence portraits of the Babcocks by Blackburn and by Copley, the Gardiners by Copley; miniatures of the Marchants by Copley and one of Elisha Reynolds Potter believed, upon reliable information, to have been painted by Gilbert Stuart. The majority of these portraits together with others are reproduced in the *History of the Narragansett Church*, edition of 1907.

their homes were built in the countryside, not within the limits of a prosperous city or town. Fortunately, several remained standing in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and their description recorded with a fair degree of accuracy. Even the house built by Robert Hazard in 1687 was reputed to be large; and the House of George Hazard of the Foddering Place, built prior to 1738, measured fifty feet on the front, "having a fan light over the entrance door above which was a large window which gave light to the hall. This hall was square with handsome oak staircase and balustrade."[1] Another early house, probably earlier even than that of Robert Hazard was the Willson house at Tower Hill. This house measured forty-two by forty-six feet, was two stories high, with a roof "of one third altitude.[2] Only the massive chimney, however, remains of the "Mansion House" of Matthew Robinson, "Hopewell," built in 1750 "in the style of the English Lodge."[3] No recognizable traces remain of such well-known houses as "Bachelor Hall" of George Rome,[4] or the "Abbey" of William Potter.[5] Nevertheless, two houses have escaped the fate of the majority: that of Rowland Robinson, the younger, on Boston Neck, and that of John Potter in Matunuck; both of which allow one to see their ample proportions[6] and also the finely executed woodwork of their interiors. It is to be regretted that these houses cannot be seen in their prime, with slave quarters,[7] cheese houses, barns and

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[1] *Hazard Family of R. I.*, p. 24.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 61. There was a "boiling spring" in the cellar of the house and a well on each side of the house. The chimney was fourteen feet square, with eleven separate flues.

[3] *Memoirs of the R. I. Bar*, p. 235.

[4] Near Barbers Heights. Described in *The History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 333.

[5] North of Kingston where Jemima Wilkinson made her home through the questionable generosity of Judge William Potter.

[6] These ample proportions may be better realized by the list of rooms in a typical home, that of Deputy Governor Robinson: "The Great Chamber, the North East Bedroom, the Dining Room Chamber Bedroom, the Dining Room, the Dining Room Closet, the Stow Closet, the Great Room, the Great Room Closet, the Great Room Bed Room, the Kitchen."

[7] Often, especially in the less pretentious establishments, the slave quarters were in either the cellar or the garret or both.

other farm buildings surrounding the "great house."[1] To these houses came many men of prominence of the day, not only from the colonies, but from the West Indies, the Continent and England. The hospitality offered was lavish, if contemporary accounts and tradition are to be relied upon, and if the inclusion in the inventory of George Hazard, as early as 1738, of five punch bowls, can be considered as indicative of the number, or capacity, of Hazard's guests.[2]

The pleasures and pastimes of the Narragansett Planters were those that would be expected of men residing in the country and possessing wealth and broad acres. Horse racing, an example of which has been noted, was perhaps the most in favor. These races were usually held on the smooth beaches adjacent to the Planters' land. Little Neck Beach, now the well known bathing beach at Narragansett Pier, was that principally used, but road racing and races on circular tracks were also enjoyed.[3] Silver tankards were often the prize, or a purse was offered. That there were intercolonial race meets with Virginia is a tradition which cannot be proven.[4]

Another traditional sport which cannot be accepted as a fact, is the hunting of the fox with hound and horn in the best manner of England. Doubtless the fox was hunted with dog and gun, for the animals were plenti-

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[1]Traces are still visible of the flower gardens which were laid out, generally in front of these houses. Old box still survives, and the traces of the geometric designs of the garden walks can as yet be traced. They were usually surrounded by a stone wall, probably more to prevent damage by stray cattle than for artistic effect. Several gardens have been said to be remarkable for their size and beauty of design. The gardens at "Bachelors Hall" were extensive and reputed to include two ornamental fish ponds; and the "Abbey" had an "elegant garden with parterres, borders, shrubbery, summer house . . .." *The History of the Narragansett Church*, p. 235.

[2]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. III, p. 70. At a later date it is said that at a wedding of one of the numerous Gardiners, there were six hundred guests.

[3]On the straight stretch of road on the crest of Tower Hill. There was a circular track on Little Rest Hill, as William Willson Pollock in a deposition stated that in 1754 the land where the Revolutionary court house now stands was "all open and used as a Race Ground"; and there is tradition of another track in Charlestown.

[4]With reference to this, Fairfax Harrison writes that "Several years ago I made a systematic search of the Virginia horse material to test the tradition recorded by Mr. I. P. Hazard (in Updike's *History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett*) that in the middle of the eighteenth century there were exchange racing meetings between the Planters in Narragansett and Virginia. I drew completely blank and I believe I may safely say there is nothing extant to substantiate that tradition from the Virginia side."

ful and their depredations upon the "dunghill Fowls" could not go unnoticed. Those who would wish to look at the Narragansett Planters through glasses with a decidedly rosy tint, frequently introduce Dean Berkeley as a witness on their behalf. George Berkeley wrote his *Alciphron* while in residence at Whitehall, near Newport, and his description of the countryside surrounding the house of Crito, is easily identified as a description of the neighborhood of Whitehall. At the beginning of the Fifth Dialogue the arguments of the philosophers are abruptly interrupted by "a confused noise of the opening of hounds, and winding of horns, and the roaring of country squires"[1] as a hunt sweeps by. It has therefore been contended that it was, in view of Berkeley's description of Rhode Island scenery, a true picture of the sport of the squires of the Island of Rhode Island, and therefore it would be extremely probable to have been typical of the Narragansett Country as well. Unfortunately, to those who have sufficient patience or interest to read the dialogues more carefully, it will become apparent that while Berkeley painted his scenery in similitude to the beauties of Aquidneck, the words which he gave to his characters indicate that they considered themselves in close proximity to London, and that their actions were the actions of men in England rather than in the Colonies. This fact, together with the fact that there survives no contemporary mention of a hunt or pack in the Colony[2] (nor do the inventories of South Kingstown list but an occasional dog), would seem to belie the

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[1]A. C. Fraser, *Works of George Berkeley*, 1901, Vol. II, p. 194.

[2]This statement is made in face of the extract from Baron de Closen's Journal printed in *France and New England* (State Street Trust Co., Boston, Vol. II, p. 45), which, after quoting from Closen at length regarding the beauties of Newport and its ladies, adds a further quotation with reference to fox hunting, in which Closen remarks that the packs owned by the gentlemen are perfect. From the context it would naturally be assumed that he was referring to the sportsmen of Rhode Island. There is a manuscript copy of the memoirs and journal of Louis Baron de Closen, an aide to General Rochambeau, in the Division of Manuscripts at the Library of Congress. Through the courtesy of Dr. J. F. Jameson, this manuscript was searched and it was found that the reference to fox hunting applied to Williamsburg, Virginia, and not to Newport. This reference occurs in Vol. II, p. 29 of the manuscript, which unfortunately cannot be printed because of restrictions placed upon it.

wish regarding the Planters' method of hunting the fox. If not belied, one might equally affirm, that because a deed of conveyance from Jeremiah Willson employed the ancient phraseology of "giving privelege of fishing, fowling, hawking and hunting—so long as wood groweth and water runneth,"[1] that the Planters spent idle hours in hawking. There was game a plenty near at hand; duck and snipe by the shore, and in the uplands, grouse and partridge and woodcock, and for larger game, the numerous deer. So they hunted and fished for sport and for food, but not with hound and horn.[2]

The usual dinners, dances and the ceremonies incident to birth, marriage, and to death, were varied, by some of the more fortunate, by their assistance at the Assemblies in Newport. Several Narragansett names are recorded in this connection, including those of Col. Daniel Updike and of several members of the Cole family, of which Justice John Cole, the Colonel's son-in-law, was a prominent member.

In short, the Narragansett Planter pursued the sports and pastimes available and suitable to his wealth and to his environment, and any attempt to presume that he was in every way akin to his English counterpart, will not bear the test of careful scrutiny. That he did enjoy them to a greater extent than in the other New England colonies is, however, true, because his leisure, augmented by the lessened requirements on his time, due to slave labor, and further, because his temperament and his broader latitude of conscience not only permitted him to indulge in, but also permitted him to enjoy, a greater period of relaxation than his more restricted neighbors. Not that they took their religion lightly, for the Church was a very living

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[1]Jonathan Hazard, whose strange ideas of suitable places to keep cheese and oats have been noted, must have been somewhat of a "character," especially as there are found bows and arrows and two dogs listed in his interesting inventory; which might present unusual speculations as to his methods of hunting.

[2]Contemporary letters and diaries contain numerous references not only to hunting and fishing but to the great quantity of game in the countrysides and to the fine fishing to be had in the rivers and the sea.

and vital thing to them, but rather because of the more tolerant form in which this religion was clothed. It might, with exceptions, be stated that the history of the Church of England in the Narragansett Country was a history of the Planters. It is certain that this church wielded more influence, especially under the guidance of Dr. MacSparran, and to some lesser degree under his successor, "Parson" Fayerweather, during the first half of the eighteenth century, than the other religious denominations in the Narragansett Country.[1] The Church of England built the second place of worship to be erected in the countryside, in the year 1707,[2] St. Paul's, now known as the Old Narragansett Church. James MacSparran, arriving fourteen years later, found the building standing, but little in the way of a united congregation. His leadership soon brought the scattered members together and the Church and its rector were soon to wield considerable influence in the community. Representatives of all the leading Planter families worshipped at St. Paul's, and although there were a number that allied themselves to the Presbyterian faith, and later others who joined the Quakers, during the pastorate of Dr. MacSparran there is little doubt but that the Church of England was the leading church in the Narragansett Country.

The Presbyterian or Congregational Church did not

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[1]*Early History of Narragansett*, p. 124. The religious faith of the Pettaquamscut Purchasers was more evenly divided between the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church (Congregationalists), resulting in the unfortunate compromise relative to the designation of title to the three hundred acres that they set aside as Ministerial Land. This compromise, enacted in 1692, is best summed up in the words of its proposer, Jahleel Brenton, who said: "Gentlemen, to give such a farm to the Presbyterians, and nothing to the church, will soon be noised at home, and may be a damage to use. And therefore, if you will be ruled by me, we will not express it to the Presbyterians, but will set it down *to the ministry*, and let them dispute who has the best title to it . . .." This was done and the dispute, finally carried to London, was not settled until 1752 when Dr. Joseph Torrey won the land for the Presbyterian Church. The avails from the sale of this land are still used for the benefit of the Church in Kingston.

[2]Caroline Hazard, *The Narragansett Friends Meeting*, p. 62. The Church lot was situated just west of Hammond Hill. The Church was removed in the year 1800 to the village of Wickford where it now stands, the oldest church edifice in New England, and where services are yet held, usually during the month of August. Both the Church and the old graveyard near Hammond Hill, where MacSparran is buried, are the property of the Diocese of Rhode Island. Prior to the erection of the Old Narragansett Church, there would seem to have been a Quaker Meeting House on Tower Hill which is mentioned by Sewall in his diary under the date of September 20, 1706.

thrive until the ordination of Joseph Torrey in 1732. When the first Congregational Church building was built does not appear to be recorded, but it was probably shortly after Dr. Torrey's arrival in Narragansett. Torrey died in 1791, in his eighty-fifth year, and with his death the church, never large and having dwindled during his last years, would seem to have been nearly extinguished, until the arrival of Rev. Oliver Brown, in the year 1802, instilled the new life into the Church that resulted in its growth to its present size and importance.[1]

The Quakers, although early in the other portions of the Colony[2] do not seem to become actively established in the Narragansett Country until a comparatively later date,[3] yet they thereafter made their teachings bear weight in the community, and their active endeavors to free the negro slaves bore fruit. A little meeting house was built in East Greenwich in 1699 and also one on Tower Hill some few years later, but the monthly meeting was not regularly held in South Kingstown until 1743. This seeming inactivity may have been caused by the dispute over the title of the Narragansett Country; for if Rhode Island failed in her claim, the lands would pass to colonies which would not have permitted the Quakers to establish themselves within their jurisdiction. Save for the dispute over the Ministerial Lands, the inhabitants of Narragansett appear to have followed each their own religious belief without hindrance and to have regarded with friendly tolerance the divergent beliefs of their neighbors.[4]

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[1]William Davis Miller, *Dr. Joseph Torrey and his Record Book of Marriages*, R. I. Hist. Soc., 1925. Also *History of the Narragansett Church*, pp. 117–118. The names of such important families as Hazard, Helme, Potter, Gardiner, Willson, &c., appear in the marriage record. These large families were evidently divided in their religious beliefs.

[2]Caroline Hazard, *The Narragansett Friends Meeting*, Boston, 1899, p. 3. The first mention of Quakers in Rhode Island is in the year 1657.

[3]*College Tom*, p. 9. Despite the fact that George Fox, prior to King Philip's War, came over to the Narragansett side and held at least one meeting there. This meeting would appear to have been held at Jireth Bull's house at Pettaquamscut.

[4]This attitude would not prevent lengthy and involved arguments on respective merits, still to be heard in the more remote portions of the countryside.

Although Newport has been referred to as the social and mercantile centre of the Narragansett Planters, the Narragansett Country itself should not be overlooked where, by the middle of the eighteenth century, there were three prosperous villages. It has been noted that the first settlement in the countryside was at Pettaquamscut, where by the year 1663 there was a considerable group of houses. This settlement was the nucleus for the village of Tower Hill, for a period the county seat and principal centre of the Narragansett Country. A few years later, as a result of the efforts of the Atherton Company, the village of Wickford was laid out, named, it is believed, from the natal town of Elizabeth Winthrop, wife of John Winthrop of Connecticut, in Essex, England. Richard Smith, in his will dated 1664, mentions the village by the name of Wickford. However, possibly because of lack of interest in its settlement, during its early years, it would seem that the Updikes undertook to enlarge the village and it was, for a period of years, known as Updike's Newtown; nevertheless, later to revert to the original name of Wickford. The town that was eventually to become the county seat and the business centre of the Narragansett Country, was the last of all to be settled; Little Rest on Little Rest Hill. It is known that by 1700 there were a number of farms, on which their owners lived, on and about this hill, but when the house lots on the village streets were first laid out[1] and built upon is unrecorded. By the year 1752, however, this village felt itself large enough and influential enough to petition the Colonial Assembly, requesting that the county seat be changed from Tower Hill to Little Rest; and, after much evident bitterness and derogatory comparisons between the two claimants, was successful.[2]

There were inns in each of these towns, the reputa-

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[1]John Moore purchased two acres on the main street, which he sold to Abraham Perkins in 1714, who built a home thereon. This is the first known record of the beginnings of the village. The name Little Rest was changed to Kingston in the year 1822.

[2]William Davis Miller, *The Removal of the County Seat from Tower Hill to Little Rest, 1752*, R. I. Hist. Soc., 1926. This triumph of Little Rest spelled the end of Tower Hill. Today only one eighteenth century house remains of this important village.

tion of those of Tower Hill, because of their situation on the travelled road between the north and south, being the most well known today.[1] Here not only was provided entertainment and lodging for the traveller, but also a central meeting place for the neighborhood. The merchants of these towns prospered in the reflected wealth and general prosperities of the Planters, and those of their houses which still stand, bespeak their success.[2]

Several reasons have been expounded to account for the decline and end of the Planter community in the Narragansett Country, but they would appear to be but contributory incidents to the main cause which resulted in the breaking up of the large estates and the elimination of the possibility of large personal fortunes, creating, thereby, a transition from this unusual type of landed gentry to the typical New England farmer. Judge Elisha Reynolds Potter gives the abolition of slavery as the proximate cause of this decline, offering in explanation the argument that because of slave holding, the children of the Narragansett Planters were brought up in leisure, "with little acquaintance with any profession or business, and when, in the course of time, slavery was abolished, and they were brought into contact with men educated to labor and to self-independence, the habits that they had acquired from slavery proved the ruin of most of them; and their property was encumbered, and passed into other hands."[3] As has been noted, slavery was never actually abolished in Rhode Island. The Act of 1784,[4] which declared the freedom of all children of slaves born after that date, was, nevertheless, as effective as if it had

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[1] *Early History of Narragansett*, 2nd. ed., 1886, p. 390. "It is said that Dr. Franklin used frequently to stop two or three days at Tower Hill, and that he said Immanuel Case's tavern there was one of the best between Philadelphia and Boston."

[2] Among the papers of Elisha R. Potter, Jr., was found a table of prices at Little Rest, dating from 1746, showing that it was a business centre of importance in the community.

[3] *Address delivered before the R. I. Hist. Soc.*, 1851.

[4] *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. X, p. 7. The provisions of this Act resulted in the possibility of slaves being held for many years after its passage which, however, probably due to adverse opinion, did not appear to have occurred, the number decreasing from 952 in 1790 to only 17 in 1830.

provided for immediate freedom. This act, however, coming, as it did, a number of years after the commencement of the decline of the Planter system, cannot in itself be considered important, but rather the sentiment against slavery itself which had steadily grown for almost half a century. It may perhaps be safely stated that the Quakers were responsible for this movement; the Church of England, while treating the negroes with what amounted to equality in religion, seemed to regard the practice without undue concern.[1] The result of this anti-slavery sentiment can be clearly seen, both in the several curtailing acts passed and in the falling off of the negro population, indicative of the diminution of importation. Up to the year 1756 the negro population increased in greater proportion than that of the whites. After this date, however, the reverse became apparent, and in 1774 whereas the white population in the colony had increased by about twenty-four thousand, the negro population decreased by one thousand.[2] In that year the importation of slaves into Rhode Island was abolished.[3] This decrease in the number of slaves, due more to the result of sentiment than to law, was, however, a contributing cause to the decline of the Planters' wealth, forcing, as it did, the employment of paid laborers with a resulting reduction in possible profits.

A further cause of the decline of the fortunes of the Narragansett Planters was the division of the large estates among their heirs. Too much stress, as has been pointed out by Channing,[4] has been laid upon the repeal by the Colony of Rhode Island, in the year 1770, of the law of primogeniture.[5] Channing points out that prior to this repeal, the Planters divided, by will

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[1]Both Bishop Berkeley and Dr. MacSparran were slave owners.

[2]According to Johnson (*Slavery in Rhode Island*) the population of the colony in 1756 was: whites, 35,939, negroes, 4697. In the year 1774 the census shows whites 59,707 and negroes but 3668.

[3]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. VII, p. 251.

[4]*The Narragansett Planters*, p. 16.

[5]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. VII, p. 24. From 1718 to 1728 this law was modified, curtailing the share of the eldest son. With very few exceptions the Planters made wills, being men of that New England type who considered the disposal of their estates as a duty.

or by gift prior to death, their large estates among their sons.[1] This is correct, but the exaggerated importance of the Act of 1770 lies in the fact that the decline of the Planters had commenced prior to that date, and that furthermore, their original great land holdings had, in many cases, previously suffered many divisions, and that the abolition of the law of primogeniture cannot be considered as a proximate cause.

Therefore, while this division of estate,[2] as well as the falling off of slavery and slave labor, can be accepted as reasons for the decline, the main and proximate causes lie in the external and internal economic conditions brought about by the curtailment of the West Indian trade by Great Britain and by the unfortunate monetary conditions existent in the Colony of Rhode Island. The height of the prosperity of the Narragansett Planters would seem to have been reached just prior to the year 1763, which marked the termination of the Seven Years War.[3] True it is that prior to this they had suffered from interference in the pursuit of their trade, both from adverse laws, enacted in England, and from the occasional interruption caused by wars, but these obstacles had been overcome, or rather circumvented, by means and ways not always able to withstand even the casual scrutiny of the law, and in the end oftentimes resulted in more lucrative returns than were possible under normal, and legal, conditions. However, with the Treaty of Paris, the colonies, the Northern Colonies in particular, entered upon a period of economic change and unrest which was to culminate, despite a

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[1]South Kingstown Probate Records, Vol. IV, p. 328. The division of the estate of Deputy Governor Robinson by will, and the division of the estate by George Hazard prior to his death, as has been previously noted, are examples in point.

[2]It may be added that in such divisions of property, every son not having equal ability, some prospered while the lands of others dwindled and were soon in a far more impoverished state than when received.

[3]A. M. Schlesinger, *Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763–1776*, 1918, p. 15. "The century closing with the Treaty of Paris in 1763 was the Golden Age of Commerce for the merchants of the thirteen continental English Colonies." Although the Planters were producers rather than merchants, they would naturally be affected by any adverse economic condition that might generally exist. It is to be noted that in the early years of the eighteenth century South Kingstown was generally rated by the Colony as next in wealth to Newport. Even as late as 1756 this township paid a larger tax than Providence.

short period of deceptive calm,[1] in the struggle for independence.

The British West Indies were, in the early eighteenth century, apparently of more value to the homeland than were the Colonies in North America, and furthermore, the personal interests in these islands were vested in men of very considerable social and political importance. It would be, perhaps, imagined that the Planters' trade would therefore be directed to these islands as a part of the British Commonwealth. Such was not the case. The adjacent French and Dutch colonies and islands offered a better market and more advantageous exchange of goods. This was especially true in the case of the French islands; because lower wages were paid to the laborers and since molasses did not have a ready market in France, these sugar planters were able to underprice their British neighbors and to divert from them the trade of the New England Colonies.[2] It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that on February 28, 1731, Parliament received "a petition of several merchant planters and others, trading to, and interested in, His Majesty's Sugar Colonies in America," complaining "that divers of His Majesty's subjects, residing within his dominions in America and elsewhere, had of late years carried on a trade to the foreign Sugar Colonies in America from whence they were supplied with sugar rum molasses and their other products,[3] instead of those from our own colonies, as well as with foreign European goods and manufactures, contrary to the intention of the

[1] *Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763–1776*, p. 241. The years from 1770 to 1773 "were for the most part years of material prosperity and political calm."

[2] *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. VI, pp. 380–381. Rhode Island imported annually about fourteen thousand hogshead of molasses, of which . . . "About eleven thousand five hundred must have been brought from foreign plantations." This from Gov. Hopkins' *Remonstrance* in 1764. There is no reason to believe that these proportions varied materially in the earlier years of the century. There was a further reason for the low prices in the French islands, set forth in a petition relative to the Molasses Act of 1733: "The French have enabled to become our rivals in the sugar trade, only by the trade carried on between them and our Northern Colonies . . . their sugar plantations, which are naturally much more fruitful than ours enable them to sell their sugars and rum at a much lower price . . . than our sugar planters . . . .." Hansard, *Parliamentary History of England*, 1811, Vol. VIII, p. 992.

[3] The cargo of the Sloop *Kingstown*, bound from Leogan to Rhode Island, is illustrative, being "14,000 Gallons of Molasses, 3,000 Weight of Sugar or more, 50 Gallons of Rum, 200 Weight of Indigo, and other things; . . . .."

laws in being, and the Treaty made with France in 1686;[1] and as that new method of trade increased and enriched the colonies of other nations, so it was injurious to the trade of this Kingdom and greatly impoverished the British Sugar Colonies . . . .."[2] The bill, now known as the Molasses Act, resulting from this petition, was presented in Parliament on January 28, 1732, and despite remonstrance from the agents of the Northern Colonies,[3] passed and became law the following year.

The duties imposed by the provisions of theMolasses Act were so severe[4] that the merchants and planters of Rhode Island continued to employ "free trade," less politely but more truthfully termed bribery and smuggling, which they carried on without hesitancy and with unconcealed relish.[5] The Narragansett Planters and their agents were greatly aided in this form of commerce by the natural opportunities offered by their proximity to an unguarded seacoast[6]

[1]Herbert L. Osgood, *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*, Vol. III, p. 375. A treaty of neutrality concluded November 1686 betwcen England and France, providing *inter alia*, that neither party should trade in each other's territories.

[2]Hansard, Vol. 15, p. 856.

[3]In March 1733, a petition of protest against the passage of the bill was presented by Richard Partridge, agent for Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. It was strenuously opposed; and Sir William Younge in so doing, stated: "they therein now tell us, that as to the Bill now depending before us, they apprehend it to be against their charter. This, I must say, is something very extraordinary, and, in my opinion, looks very like aiming at an independency . . . .." The petition was not brought up. Further petitions of protest from the agents of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Virginia and Carolina, the acceptance of which had been recommended by an Order in Council, were left unattended to by the House of Commons. Hansard, Vol. 15, p. 1261, and Vol. 16, p. 34 *et seq.*

[4]Sixpcnce a gallon.

[5]William B. Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, pp. 266–267. With rcference to free trade in the seventeenth century states: "This prosperity was not hindered by the Navigation Acts. The great expansion in colonial commerce from 1663 to 1676 and 1685 rather shows that these Acts, looscly administered, or wholly evaded in an unfriendly community, helped the commerce of the young but vigorous colonies of New England." It has also been stated that the Molasses Act had "its chief effect in increasing the volume of colonial smuggling." Schlesinger, *Colonial Merchants*, p. 19.

[6]Newport was the sole official port of entry in Rhode Island. One customs collector, with a meagre staff, to cover four hundred miles of coast line, who were not always above reproach, "shutting their eyes or at least opening them no farther than their own private interests." *Providence Gazette*, Jan. 14/21, 1764. *Calendar of State Papers*, 1719-1720, 377. Newport, Sept. 7, 1719. ". . . nor can the officers of H. M. Customes be safe, in putting the Acts of Trade in force, because on seizeing any vessill for illegal trade (being out of command) they may easily be carryd off to sea or made willing to be put on shoar, and wch. hath been seaveral times, and very lately practiced . . . in this town . . . the present collector, who haveing made seizure of severall hogsheads of clarrett, illegally imported, . . . the town people had the insolence to rise . . . and haveing by violence after a riotcous, and tumultuous manner rescued, and possessed themselves of the seizures, sett the hoghead ahead, stove them open, and with pailes drunke out, and carryd away most of the wine . . ."

and took advantage of these benefits, if we are to believe the contemporary official complaints, with a skill acquired by inheritance and long practice.[1] That England, and therefore supposedly the Colonies, was at war with Spain and France at different periods subsequent to the passage of the Molasses Act,[2] acted as but a slight deterrent; for the convenient fiction of the "flag of truce,"[3] together with the very certain eagerness, especially on the part of the French, to prevent any interruption of their lucrative trade, made the risk comparatively slight. During this period, it has been correctly affirmed that respect for the law was at a low ebb and so was the enforcement of it.

This colonial prosperity, so vital to the well being of the Narragansett Planter, was nearing its end mainly because of the methods by which it achieved its success. During the Seven Years War[4] the British government became justly alarmed at the assistance given to their enemies by this illicit trade on the part of the New England Colonies with the French West Indies. In 1760 William Pitt sent to the Governors of North America and the West Indies a circular letter concerning this trade,[5] which marked the beginning of the end

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[1]A dexterity in evasion, it is to be feared, handed down to their descendants in recent years in the landing of other contraband than molasses.

[2]The war with Spain in 1739, "the war of Jenkins' ear," caused little interruption, but the wars with France, the war of the Austrian Succession in 1744, and the War of 1756, culminating in the Treaty of Paris in 1763, were much more important to the trade of the Northern Colonies, and the latter conflict, as will be seen, was to result in strict enforcement and curtailment.

[3]This simple expedient of carrying a few prisoners for exchange to give the vessel immunity from seizure, while at the same time carrying a considerable cargo for trade, was overdone and in the latter years of the Seven Years War, insurance rates on such ships were greatly increased and finally the risk was refused by the underwriters. A further method to escape the liability of trading with the enemy was to proceed to a neutral, usually Dutch, port where agents of the French merchants were at hand to trade. Among such favorite neutral grounds were the islands of St. Eustatius and the colony Surinam (Dutch Guiana). Nicholas Brown in the *Providence Gazette* of Jan. 5, 1764, advertises for Surinam Horses, meaning horses to be shipped to Surinam, their ultimate destination undisclosed.

[4]In fact, for the Colonies, a nine year war, as the first hostilities and bloodshed occurred on May 27, 1754, but the formal declaration of war between England and France was not made until May 18, 1756.

[5]Gertrude S. Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt*, etc., Vol. II, p. 320, August 23, 1760. Governor Stephen Hopkins' reply admits that the flags of truce traded with the French, but did not supply them with provisions or "war like stores." *R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. VI, pp. 263–265.

of the laxity of enforcement[1] of the various acts with reference to commerce, and which was to curtail so effectively the trade of the Narragansett Planters with the West Indies. Pitt had a further motive than trade and revenue alone, for he saw clearly that the enrichment of these French possessions, aside from giving them added strength in the struggle, prevented, or at least postponed, their desired siezure and annexation as valuable additions to the British Colonies. In the meantime the Molasses Act of 1733 continued to be in force,[2] but, as has been noted, with little effect upon the restriction of trade. Pitt's letter was indicative of a changing temper of the home government which was to result, in the year 1764, in the passage of the Sugar Act,[3] based upon the Molasses Act, but although carrying less severe duty rates, provided more adequate means of enforcement. When the announcement of the passage and insured enforcement[4] of the Sugar Act reached the American Colonies, New England, especially, received the ill news with a rage akin to despair. Governor Bradford of Massachusetts stated that the news "caused a greater alarm . . . than the taking of Fort William Henry,"[5] and Joseph Wanton, although a servant of the Crown, being collector of customs in Newport, wrote that "everybody with us wears a most heavy Countenance things being in a much worse way than when the warr continued."[6] A Philadelphia merchant writing to Nicholas Brown, to whom

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[1]*Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution*, 1763–1776, p. 45. "Colonial smugglers felt the first impact of an opposing imperial interest during the last inter-colonial war, when covetous of large profits, they supplied the French beligerents with foodstuffs whereby they were enabled to prolong the war."

[2]Originally but for six years it had been extended from time to time.

[3]This act came in force, April 5, 1764. The duty upon molasses was reduced from sixpence to threepence a gallon.

[4]A formidable list of twenty-seven ships of war assigned to the duty of enforcement was published in the *Providence Gazette*, Sept. 24, 1763 and the *Newport Mercury*, Sept. 26, 1763.

[5]Quoted by Frederick Bernays Wiener, *R. I. Merchants and the Sugar Act*, the N. E. Quarterly, Vol. III, No. 3, July 1930. This excellent exposition of the economic events leading up to the Remonstrance signed by Governor Stephen Hopkins of R. I., is a valuable contribution to the study of the commercial history prior to the passage of the Sugar Act.

[6]The cessation of privateering was of course not resultant from the Sugar Act, but rather from the termination of the last colonial war, but it was a part of that prosperous era.

the Act was extremely vital, exclaimed, "Nothing but Ruin seems to hang over our heads."[1] Gone were the golden days of free trade and privateering[2] with its hazards, adventures and large profits.

More than a decade prior to the occurrence of this catastrophe to Colonial trade, a group of men in Massachusetts formed an informal merchants' club[3] which, with the approach of the threatening storm, took a more concrete form in "The Society for encouraging Trade and Commerce within the Province of Massachusetts Bay."[4] This organization, by a committee, prepared and published a "State of Trade"[5] which was distributed with a covering letter throughout the colonies and to the colonial agents in Great Britain. The Society's action stirred Rhode Island and a somewhat similar "club," presumably led by Stephen Hopkins, was organized and was instrumental in the drawing up of the well known "Remonstrance."[6] The Remonstrance was presented and passed at a special session of the Assembly convened in mid-winter at the town of Little Rest, the county seat of the Narragansett Planters.[7] This document is of great value as a survey of colonial trade; and its effect upon the passage of the Sugar Act might have been in some degree effective, but due to an unfortunate delay—in which some people saw the obstructionalist hand of Henry Ward—it did not arrive in London until the

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[1]*R. I. Merchants and the Sugar Act*, pp. 468–469.

[2]How many of the Narragansett Planters invested in privateering is not known, but at least one, Robert Hazard of Point Judith, is recorded to have foreseen profits in this enterprise. He was part owner of the sloop *Success*, and was one of the signers of the agreement made on Nov. 10, 1744, providing for the sloop *Success* and the sloop *Revenge* to operate in company. John F. Jameson, *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period*, 1923, pp. 463–465. It is interesting to note that the *Success*, a British ship, was recaptured from the enemy by Commander Rous of the *Young Eagle* which had siezed the sloop *Kingstown*.

[3]Formed about 1750.

[4]Established in 1763.

[5]The Committee was appointed on Dec. 20, 1763.

[6]*R. I. Col. Rec.*, Vol. VI, pp. 378–383. "Remonstrance of the Colony of R. I. to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations." It contains a detailed review of the commercial activities of the Colony.

[7]Jan. 27, 1764.

Sugar Act has passed.[1] Therefore, it may well be believed that the enforcement of this Act, closely to be followed by the unpopular Stamp Act[2] and subsequently the Townshend Acts[3] and the resultant non-imporation movement,[4] was the main cause of the decline of the prosperity of the Narragansett Planters, a decline general to the whole Colonial trade in which the Planters were, despite their unusual situation, very closely allied.[5]

To this main cause of decline of the Planters, and to the other causes already mentioned as contributory to it, there must needs be added one other: the difficulties presented to the carrying on of trade in the face of a fluctuating currency within the Colony. The history of the emission of paper notes, or bills of credit, in Rhode Island from the first "bank" in 1710 until the prohibition by Great Britain of such issues in 1751, is a history of a series of acts of expediency to meet the extravagant financial needs of the Colonial Government. In 1710, the date of the First Bank, an ounce of silver was worth eight shillings in paper; in 1740 this same amount of metal had become equal to twenty-seven shillings in

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[1]*R. I. Merchants and the Sugar Act*, p. 496.

[2]Enacted Feb. 27, 1765; repealed Feb. 22, 1766.

[3]Placing a duty on glass, lead, paints and paper. Removed the export duty on tea out of England, but placed an import duty of three pence a pound on tea landed in America. As the colonists had been smuggling tea from the Dutch in larger quantities than that they imported from England, this act put a stop to the importation of any but English tea. These acts culminated in the non-importation movement.

[4]*Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution*, p. 154+. This movement commenced in 1767. Rhode Island was reluctant to join the other colonies, but the Newport merchants finally agreed, in October 1769 having been forced to participate in this general action as "all intercourse with Rhode Island is nearly shut up as if a plague were there." *Mass. Gazette and News-Letter*, Oct. 5, 1769. However, the Newport merchants stipulated that their action would not become effective until January 1, 1770, evidently to allow time to "stock up." They limited the non-importation to goods of British manufacture and East Indian merchandise. Upon the partial repeal of the Townshend Act in May 1770, the Rhode Island ports broke away from the agreement.

[5]It has been suggested that as a result of the conditions existing in the colonies, the Narragansett Planters were already turning from production for trade to trade itself, and the outstanding example of Christopher Champlin, merchant of Newport, is illustrative of this. It is also interesting that the apparent decline in the fortunes of the Planters was reflected in the small tradesmen and craftsmen of the countryside. The case of Samuel Casey is an example. A prosperous and highly esteemed silversmith, even beyond the confines of his native colony, it would appear that due to loss of trade, he took up conterfeiting. This he commenced shortly after 1760, which is significant considering the conditions that prevailed.

bills of credit.[1] Even after the restrictions effected by Great Britain, this "old tenor," as it was called, continued in circulation, and its depreciation continued.[2] This fluctuation not only had severe effects upon trade within the limits of Rhode Island, but its result upon trade with other colonies, maintaining a more stable system, was nigh to disastrous. Although Massachusetts was the first to issue bills, and to go beyond all others in amount issued, her wealth made it possible for her to sustain her values. In April 1750 Rhode Island and Massachusetts bills, after years of difference, were on a par; but by September of that same year Rhode Island bills had depreciated twenty per cent, and a Spanish Milled Dollar worth 45/ in Massachusetts had increased in value to 54/ in Rhode Island. Such fluctuations had the natural effect on the prices of commodities, for example, the value of corn in Little Rest in 1742 was fifteen shillings and in 1761, four pounds.[3]

So that remarkable community of great landholders, benefiting from wealth and all that wealth could bring, gradually came to an end. The markets for their stock and dairy products cut off by trade restrictions, their lands and money depreciated in value, their slaves dwindling in number and their estates broken up into smaller holdings, the Narragansett Planters and their traditions faded into the shadows of the past, leaving behind them a somewhat indistinct but colorful picture of a rural community quite apart from all others of the Colonial days in the North.

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[1]The principal reference for Rhode Island's monetary system is *Some Account of the Bills of Credit or Paper Money of Rhode Island.* A further example of the scale of depreciation is to be found in the wolf bounty: in 1703 one pound was considered sufficient, but by 1739 it required a bounty of thirty pounds to induce the inhabitants to finally rid the colony of these animals. In 1738, either through error or design, a remarkable change was made in the motto on the bills: *In Te Domine Speramus* being replaced by *In Te Domine Speravi.* From 1751 to 1775 the Colony ceased the issue of bills of credit. Upon the resumption of this practice made necessary by the war, the rapidity of depreciation accelerated: in 1777 one hundred Spanish Milled Dollars were worth $105 in paper, and in 1781, $1600. It is easy to believe the contemporary statement that a man might enrich himself by being cast in jail for debt.

[2]In 1751 one Spanish Milled Dollar was worth £2/16/– in "old tenor" and in 1763, £7/–/–.

[3]A later example of the difficulties experienced with a fluctuating currency is shown in a receipt given by Joseph Perkins in December 1786. "Rec'd of Elijah Hoxsie in flax seed & in Cheese four Pounds Seventeen Shillings & four Pence to be Paid in Gold Nicklesses at the Rate they went at in the year 1774."

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